

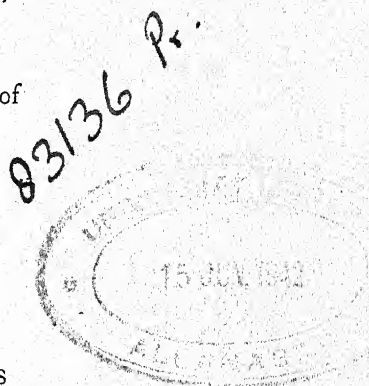
# The Private Correspondence School Enrollee

*An investigation of selected groups of persons who enrolled for courses in the INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS during the years 1928 and 1932, with respect to their stated objectives for studying the courses in which they enrolled, some factors that seem to influence their persistence in the work outlined for the courses, and the satisfactions they find in correspondence study*

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R. B. K.

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The Private  
Correspondence School  
Enrollee

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

IN A broad sense, the first correspondence student might very well be thought of as the first creature to attempt to understand instructional markings left by some other creature—probably even before the Cro-Magnon man endeavoring to read the scratches made on a rock to indicate the direction his brother had taken on the hunt. From the very crudest forms of written instruction, man has advanced to the remarkable refinements of the present era, wherein we find that very nearly as many people are enrolled in correspondence courses as are enrolled in regular classes in colleges and universities. Not the least remarkable of the modern so-called correspondence courses are those developed for instruction of the blind by what is known as the Braille method of printing.

Although individual and voluntary seeking of educational enlightenment from written instruction has been going on with varying success for centuries, it was not until comparatively recent times that schools were established for centralized dispensing of instruction by correspondence methods.

What was probably the first private correspondence school was established in 1856 in Berlin, Germany, by Charles Toussaint and Gustav Langenscheidt. The first course offered was a course in French for Germans; subsequently several other language courses were added. The Langenscheidt school is today still giving language instruction by mail by practically the same methods used at its inception.

During the thirty-five years following the opening of the Langenscheidt school several sporadic but unsuccessful attempts were made to start correspondence schools in the United States. It is a rather striking circumstance, however, that the two principal

movements in the home study field in this country were finally launched almost simultaneously. In 1891 Thomas J. Foster, editor of *Mining Herald*, directed the preparation of a course on Coal Mining that was to become the foundation of the largest institution in the private correspondence school field. One of the first official acts of Dr. William Rainey Harper, who became president of the University of Chicago in 1890, was the establishment of the first university correspondence division in the United States.

Despite the wide variety of present-day opinion regarding the values of correspondence schools in general, there can be no question that the school with which this study is particularly concerned was originally organized "to meet a felt need." Aroused by the frequent mine accidents causing serious injury or death to his neighbors, Foster was primarily instrumental in causing the Pennsylvania State Legislature of 1885 to pass laws safeguarding the welfare of mine workers. These laws included the compulsory certification of mine foremen, and Foster started a "Question and Answer Column," later known as the "Correspondence Column," in his mining journal to assist the miners in gaining information essential to securing a certificate. Interest in the column was so great that the newspaper office staff proved unequal to the task of answering inquiries. Foster's next step was the preparation of pamphlets dealing with questions asked by the Examining Board and also with more advanced mining problems. Again his effort met with an enthusiastic response from the miners, and he thereupon determined to prepare a course concerned with important technical mining information simplified to be intelligible to mine workers. This original course was so popular that others were demanded; the resulting rapid growth in number and variety of courses culminated in the organization of the International Correspondence Schools, a corporation which today offers more than three hundred courses, mainly vocational in nature, in which instruction is carried on by mail from the headquarters at Scranton, Pennsylvania. The gross cumulative enrollment of the International Correspondence Schools is claimed to be in excess of four million people; it is undoubtedly the largest



correspondence school, for its enrollment represents "about 20% of the entire private home study field."<sup>1</sup>

The quick success of Thomas J. Foster's correspondence school was immediately noted, and innumerable similar institutions were organized, although most of such imitators have been short-lived. There are today about four hundred private correspondence schools operating in the United States, and their total annual enrollment amounts to "between 700 and 750 thousand."<sup>2</sup>

#### NEED FOR THE STUDY

A survey of the literature concerning private correspondence schools reveals an even greater paucity of scientific reports than was pointed out by G. B. Smith<sup>3</sup> for the home study field as a whole. The most significant published contributions to date regarding the private correspondence school field are Noffsinger's report entitled *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums and Chautauquas*<sup>4</sup> and a critical article regarding correspondence study among the unemployed written by Bird and Paterson<sup>5</sup> of the University of Minnesota.

In view of the lack of unprejudiced, scientific knowledge regarding this large area of educational activity; in consideration of the large contribution that home study is making in the rapidly emerging field of adult education; and in cognizance of the interest and activity that hundreds of high schools and small colleges are displaying in the use of supervised correspondence study,<sup>6</sup> it was deemed advisable to start a series of studies of the private correspondence school field as well as of the university home-study area. It is hoped that this study will prove to be of basic value for

<sup>1</sup> From unpublished statements made in 1938 by J. S. Noffsinger, Director of the National Home Study Council, Washington, D. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> G. B. Smith, *Home Study in Adult Education*, p. 86. 1935.

<sup>4</sup> J. S. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums and Chautauquas*. 1926.

<sup>5</sup> C. Bird and D. G. Paterson, "Commercial Correspondence Courses and Occupational Adjustments of Men," *Bulletin of the Employment Stabilization Research Institute, University of Minnesota*, Vol. II, No. 7, p. 27. 1934.

<sup>6</sup> W. H. Gaumnitz and M. B. McCabe, "Good References on Supervised Correspondence Study in High Schools," *Bibliography No. 54*, United States Department of the Interior, Office of Education. 1937.

a series of investigations in this little known but important area of educational activity.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

For clarification at the outset, certain terms used in this report are here defined.

*Private correspondence school*—an institution privately owned, not connected with a college, university, seminary, or state education department, offering instruction by mail.

*Enrollee*—a person who enrolls for a correspondence school course and makes at least a down payment therefor, whether or not he returns any lessons to the school for criticism or completes payment for the course. Some correspondence schools make a distinction between "students" and "enrollees"; the former being enrollees who complete one or more lessons and send the completed lessons to the school for criticism. However, to avoid any question regarding the legitimacy of using figures based on this latter method of determining enrollment, it was deemed advisable in this study to consider every person who enrolled, regardless of his subsequent status.

*Lesson*—a lesson in an International Correspondence School or Women's Institute course is quite different from a lesson in a public school or university course. "An I.C.S. lesson explains an entire subject or an important part of a subject, the only exception being when a subject is so important that it requires a series of lessons. The purpose of each lesson is to give the student all the information he may need about the subject discussed, in a form that he can master in the least possible time. Each written lesson usually requires the study of printed texts varying from 20 to 160 pages, the average being between 50 and 60 pages. As nearly as can be determined, an average (study time) for all I.C.S. lessons is 17.3 hours, but this figure may be misleading because so much depends on the nature of the lesson."<sup>7</sup> Records indicate a range of from eight hours on a lesson in a lettering course to twenty-five hours average time required for a lesson in a navigation course.

<sup>7</sup> R. T. Strohm, *Vocational Guidance Manual*, pp. iii and v. 1938.

## PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study is specifically an investigation of random samplings of persons who enrolled for courses in the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute during the years 1928 and 1932, to discover if there are certain general characteristics of the persons enrolled for courses by these schools; to determine whether or not there is any relationship between enrollees' selection of courses and their geographical location; sex, marital status, age, education, occupation, and ability; to ascertain whether or not any relationship exists between enrollees' persistence in studying courses and their geographical location, sex, marital status, age, education, occupation, and ability; to show what effect selected characteristics of the methods of instruction and administration of the schools have on completion of courses by the enrollees; and to reveal enrollees' stated reasons for studying correspondence courses, their expressed opinions regarding various phases of such study, and their stated reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with correspondence courses.

## CHAPTER II

### SELECTION AND COLLECTION OF DATA

MATERIALS for this investigation were secured (*a*) from the records of a sampling of enrollees selected from the files of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute at their main office in Scranton, Pennsylvania; (*b*) from replies to a questionnaire sent to each of the enrollees of the above-mentioned sampling, except those residing in foreign countries; and (*c*) from interviews with persons who enrolled for International Correspondence Schools courses from certain selected New Jersey communities.

#### SELECTION OF INSTITUTIONS TO BE STUDIED

One of the first problems of this investigation was the selection of the institutions to be studied. The International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute at Scranton, Pennsylvania, were chosen for the following reasons:

The International Correspondence Schools constitute the oldest private correspondence school center in the United States.

The International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute constitute one of the largest educational institutions existing today. Their total enrollment since 1891 is claimed to exceed four million persons.

The International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute are members of the National Home Study Council. This Council functions largely as an accrediting agency in the private correspondence school field; its purpose, according to its charter, is the "Promoting of sound educational standards and ethical business practices within the home study field"; its object, according to the Director, "is to cooperate with other interested agencies in making effective a constructive program designed to curb and eliminate unfair exploitation of ambitious people by unworthy

correspondence or home study schools."<sup>1</sup> Since its inauguration in September, 1926, only fifty-two of the schools applying for admission have qualified for membership.

Officials of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute expressed willingness to allow an impartial examination of the records of their institutions.

Preliminary examination of materials in the files of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute indicated that records concerning enrollees have been carefully and accurately kept over a period of years.

The International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute may be thought of as one institution in many respects. They occupy the same buildings, make use of the same financial departments, and have interlocking directorates. They are separate institutions in so far as, (1) each has a distinctly separate instruction staff; (2) the nature of the curricula offering differs, for the Women's Institute is confined mainly to courses for housewives, such as dressmaking and cooking; (3) the method of securing enrollees varies, as the Women's Institute has no field representatives; and (4) the Women's Institute limits its advertising to magazines for women, whereas the International Correspondence Schools advertise in trade and technical magazines as well as in some of the popular pulp-paper publications.

#### SELECTION OF SAMPLING OF ENROLLEES FOR GENERAL DATA AND QUESTIONNAIRE

An unbiased selection of cases to be studied was made readily possible because of the method used by the International Correspondence Schools in recording enrollments in the Numerical Register, "a record of all student accounts in numerical order according to the number assigned at the time that the student's enrollment is accepted."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>J. S. Noffsinger, *Home Study Blue Book and Directory of Private Home Study Schools and Courses*. 1935.

<sup>2</sup>Statement made in 1936 by W. B. Gardner, Auditor, International Correspondence Schools.

The years 1928 and 1932 were selected as suitable for this study because (a) 1932 was the latest year of enrollment which would allow for completion of the longer courses of the original course selections by the enrollees; (b) these years occur shortly before and after the stock market crash of 1929 that marked the critical beginning of the financial depression; and (c) the years 1928 and 1932 are included in the study of the Columbia Home Study Bureau, by G. B. Smith,<sup>3</sup> with which it was hoped that some results of this study could be compared.

It was decided to use a sampling of about a thousand cases from each of the two years with which this study is concerned. It was found that the I.C.S. enrollment for 1928 was 67,701 and for 1932 was 30,285; the W.I. enrollment for 1928 was 12,500 and for 1932 was 2,777. For the year 1928 approximately every sixtieth case was selected from the Numerical Register; this provided a total of 1,144 I.C.S. and 208 W.I. enrollees. The year 1932 showed a considerable decrease in enrollment, so every thirtieth case was selected, giving a total for that year of 1,016 I.C.S. and 92 W.I. enrollees. It will be noted that the sampling was selected strictly by numerical order.

After the name and number of each of the cases to be studied had been selected, the actual data were secured from two sources: (a) the Permanent Record Card, which is filled out for each enrollment, transfer, and assignment of courses, and filed in the Educational Service Department, and (b) the Account Card, which is filed for each enrollee in the Comptroller's Department.<sup>4</sup> Information on these cards was recorded by the clerical staff of the schools and was secured from data furnished by the enrollee, largely in the form of answers to questions directed to him by the field representatives and instructors of the schools.

#### THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Out of the 2,460 cases selected for study from the records of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute,

<sup>3</sup> G. B. Smith, *Home Study in Adult Education*, p. 9. 1935.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendixes I and II.

221 were found to have enrolled from foreign countries. Because of difficulty in arranging for return postage, questionnaires were not sent to any foreign enrollees. A questionnaire<sup>5</sup> was sent to each of the 2,239 cases who enrolled from any section of the United States or its possessions.

Of the 2,239 questionnaires sent to enrollees, 116 (or 5.2%) brought complete replies and 543 (or 24.3%) were returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable. It is likely that at least one-third of the remainder, approximately 530, did not reach the person to whom they were addressed because they were not forwarded from the enrollee's old address, a reason that became apparent when the personal interviews were being made. This indicates that of those who actually received the questionnaires, about 9.9 per cent returned responses. Considering that the questionnaire was addressed to people not particularly interested in educational research, and that no reward was offered for completion of the questionnaire, this seems to be a reasonably large response, especially when compared with commercial questionnaires, to which a response of 5 per cent is considered satisfactory—"where the giving of information is purely voluntary."<sup>6</sup>

#### THE INTERVIEWS

A series of personal interviews were made in order to gain as complete a report as feasible of the attitude of persons toward the correspondence courses in which they were enrolled. Certain factors determined the selection of enrollees to be interviewed.

New Jersey was selected as the general location for the interviews. This selection was made in cognizance of the frequently expressed aim of the International Correspondence Schools—"preparation of the man on the job for the job"—that is, definitely in-service vocational training: New Jersey is one of the most predominantly industrial states in the United States.<sup>7</sup> The sampling of enrollees to be interviewed included all persons who enrolled for International Correspondence Schools courses during the year

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix IV.

<sup>6</sup> *Retail Credit Survey, Domestic Commerce Series, No. 98*, p. 81. 1936.

<sup>7</sup> *Hammond New World Loose Leaf Atlas*. Sixth edition, p. 33. New York: C. S. Hammond and Company.

1932 and who at the time of the survey were living in certain communities. Because of the method of filing used in the Central Files of the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton, it was necessary to select certain communities for study instead of making a broader sampling. The following criteria were used in selecting the communities: size, eight classifications similar to those used by portions of the United States Census; diversity of industry; and geographical location within the area. On the basis of these criteria, Newark, Passaic, New Brunswick, Hillside, Vineland, Beverly, High Bridge, and East Millstone were used as the loci for the interviews.

The task of locating the enrollees to be interviewed proved to be a very difficult one. A first call was made at the latest address given in the records of the International Correspondence Schools. If the enrollee was still living at that address an appointment was usually made to see him at a convenient time. Of this group 98.7 per cent were eventually interviewed.

In excess of 50 per cent of the group selected for interviews, however, had moved from even the latest address on record at the International Correspondence Schools. Of this number about 60 per cent were finally located and interviewed and the remainder were found to have "disappeared" or to have moved out of town. The methods used in attempting to locate missing enrollees were as follows: Inquiry was first made at the address given in the records, and in a little over half the cases some forwarding address was secured. A call was made at the forwarding address; often this proved fruitless, but in some cases another forwarding address was secured. Sometimes no information was obtainable from the present residents of the original address (due usually to recency of occupation of the apartment), in which case calls were made at neighboring houses and at near-by stores where occasionally clues were picked up leading to eventual discovery of the enrollee. These latter sources of information were useless in most instances, however. Two very useful sources of information proved to be the Newark City Directory<sup>8</sup> and the United States postal officials;

<sup>8</sup> Most of the communities had no directory, or, if they did have one, it was much older than the International Correspondence School records.



the latter were particularly helpful in the smaller communities, where it was necessary to locate enrollees living on rural routes. The final attempt to locate enrollees was made through the employer's address as given in the International Correspondence School data, although this source was seldom of value when the others had failed.

Six weeks before any interviews were attempted a copy of the questionnaire was sent to each of the enrollees in the group to be interviewed; the entire make-up of this questionnaire was identical with the one sent to the larger group of enrollees from 1928 and 1932. After allowing one month for possible replies, a letter was sent to each enrollee over the signature of Professor Frank W. Cyr, sponsor for this dissertation, and on Teachers College stationery, stating simply that Mr. R. B. Kennan would call on him shortly in connection with a study concerning correspondence school courses and expressing the hope that the interviewer would find him at home. Five persons answered this questionnaire. All five were dissatisfied, whereas the majority of the replies to the main questionnaire were favorable to correspondence study, a rather unusual response in view of the fact that apparently no selective factor was involved that might account for this frankness on the part of the dissatisfied group, unless it be the factor of proximity to university centers and hence some appreciation of the values of research. Practically all the people interviewed were asked, toward the close of the interview, how it happened that they did not reply to the questionnaire; in three cases the reply indicated suspicion of any unsolicited mail, in seven cases the enrollees stated that they had intended to reply when they received Professor Cyr's letter but decided to wait to see the interviewer (doubtful, since the letter from Dr. Cyr did not go out until at least a month after the arrival of the questionnaire), and in the remaining cases lack of reply was due to inertia ("I intended to reply but just didn't get around to it," "I've been so rushed lately I haven't had time to write to anyone," "I'm too tired when I get home from work to write any sort of an intelligent statement").

A study of the spot-maps revealed that the 1932 International Correspondence School enrollees were quite widespread geo-

graphically in the various communities where the interviews were made.

One hundred twenty-three people were found to have been enrolled in 1932 in the New Jersey communities selected as the loci for the interviews. Of this number seventy-five were finally located and interviewed, nineteen had moved to remote communities, fifteen had disappeared leaving no forwarding addresses, seven were completely unknown at all addresses given in the International Correspondence School records, two women had married and their new names and addresses were not known, three had enrolled for books or outfits only, one had died, and one man was not available through his company address, which was the only one given in the International Correspondence School records. Exclusive of the three people who had enrolled for materials only, we find that of the sampling selected for interviews, 63 per cent were located and interviewed, 35 per cent had moved away and were either unknown to present residents of the community or had moved too far to make it feasible to continue the search for them, 1 per cent had died, and 1 per cent was located but could not be interviewed.

## CHAPTER III

### CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF ENROLLEES IN RELATION TO SELECTION AND COMPLETION OF COURSES

THE general purpose of the investigation reported in this chapter is to discover whether or not the enrollees' selection of courses for study or their persistence in studying the courses was affected by such readily observable characteristics as their geographical situation, sex, marital status, age, education, occupation, or ability.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF ENROLLEES

The continental spread of the enrollment of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute is revealed in Table I. There it appears that the number of enrollees in the various regions is generally in proportion to the population of the regions. The North Central States contribute the largest number of enrollees each year, followed by the Middle Atlantic States, whereas the smallest enrollments come from the Mountain States and New England.

In Table I it appears likewise that there is some difference in the interest shown in correspondence study by enrollees in various regions, as evidenced by the relative completion of courses by the various groups. The men of the Mountain region show a uniformly low percentage of lessons completed (mean  $16 \pm 3$ ) in the courses for which they enrolled, whereas the women of that region show decidedly the highest tenacity in studying courses (mean  $54 \pm 10$ ). On the other hand, the Canadian men show a better record of percentage of lessons completed in courses than men from almost any region of the United States, whereas Canadian women show comparatively low percentages of lessons completed (mean  $29 \pm 4$ ) as compared with the women from any region of the United States. The differences of the means of the percentages of lessons completed in courses by enrollees from various sections

TABLE I

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE PERSONS AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

14

## PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ENROLLEE

Geographical Location	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution	Per Cent of Sample	Per Cent of National Population
New England	I.C.S.	1928	79	26.14	2.88	25.46	6.9	
	I.C.S.	1932	66	23.49	3.18	25.60	6.5	6.8
	W.I.	Combined	20	54.00	8.67	37.80	6.7	
Middle Atlantic	I.C.S.	1928	268	21.64	1.47	24.02	23.4	
	I.C.S.	1932	231	30.41	2.07	31.39	22.7	22.0
	W.I.	Combined	55	33.00	4.37	32.10	18.3	
South Atlantic	I.C.S.	1928	94	27.45	3.13	30.17	8.2	
	I.C.S.	1932	104	20.58	2.48	25.15	10.2	12.8
	W.I.	Combined	23	35.44	7.69	36.05	7.7	
North Central	I.C.S.	1928	315	19.92	1.34	23.76	27.5	
	I.C.S.	1932	258	25.74	1.70	27.18	25.4	32.4
	W.I.	Combined	73	32.53	3.67	31.18	24.3	
South Central	I.C.S.	1928	139	16.87	1.78	20.90	12.1	
	I.C.S.	1932	101	22.43	2.68	26.76	9.9	18.5
	W.I.	Combined	38	35.79	5.47	33.28	12.7	
Mountain	I.C.S.	1928	33	11.97	1.87	10.58	2.9	
	I.C.S.	1932	33	21.36	3.71	21.01	3.2	3.1
	W.I.	Combined	13	54.23	9.97	34.52	4.3	
Pacific	I.C.S.	1928	116	16.72	2.05	22.02	10.1	
	I.C.S.	1932	110	25.36	2.60	27.13	10.8	6.8
	W.I.	Combined	38	49.21	5.89	35.81	12.7	
District of Columbia	I.C.S.	1928	9	17.22	5.96	16.85	0.8	
	I.C.S.	1932	8	33.75	14.20	37.56	0.8	0.4
	W.I.	Combined	1	.....	.....	.....	0.3	
Canada	I.C.S.	1928	79	28.80	3.42	30.24	6.9	
	I.C.S.	1932	94	20.36	2.88	27.74	9.2	
	W.I.	Combined	38	28.95	4.36	26.51	12.7	

of this country and foreign countries are not considered significant.

The data given in Table II are closely associated with those in Table I, for here is given the enrollment by density of population. The figures showing relative completion of courses by students in communities of various size are somewhat less striking than is true of enrollees from various geographical regions, but the spread of enrollments as compared with the spread of national population is rather surprising. Table II discloses that only about 20 per cent of the enrollment comes from regions having a population of 2,500 or less, whereas nearly 43.8 per cent<sup>1</sup> of the population of the United States in 1930 was located in regions having a population under 2,500. From the foregoing, it appears that the International Correspondence Schools serve a distinctly urban population. The Women's Institute has relatively a more even spread of enrollment in this respect, as 30 per cent of the enrollees of this school in the period studied came from regions with a population of 2,500 or less. This difference in relative spread by density of population is probably due to the methods used to secure enrollments by the two institutions: the Women's Institute secures its enrollments only by correspondence between the school and the potential enrollees as a result of advertising in various women's magazines that reach rural as well as urban women; the International Correspondence Schools depend to a very large extent upon enrollments secured by direct contact with the prospective enrollees through field representatives who work on commission.

As to the relative completion of courses by enrollees from regions of various population densities, it appears that there is not as much difference between the International Correspondence Schools' enrollees in communities of various sizes in a given year as between enrollees in the same sized communities who enrolled during a relatively prosperous year (1928) and a year of financial depression (1932).<sup>2</sup> The persons enrolling for International Correspondence School courses from communities of 1,000 or less population represent a slightly lower percentage of lessons completed in courses ( $\text{mean } 20 \pm 2$ ) than those from communities of

<sup>1</sup> *Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, p. 14. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> The differences between the two years are more clearly shown in Table XXIV.

TABLE II

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY POPULATION OF COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE PERSONS WERE LIVING AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Density of Population	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution	Per Cent of Sample	Per Cent of National Population
Over 100,000	I.C.S.	1928	362	21.85	1.31	24.88	31.6	
	I.C.S.	1932	317	25.88	1.58	28.01	31.2	29.6
	W.I.	Combined	74	35.68	3.73	31.89	24.7	
50,001 to 100,000	I.C.S.	1928	104	18.94	2.21	22.42	9.1	
	I.C.S.	1932	65	22.08	3.18	25.40	6.4	5.3
	W.I.	Combined	17	26.77	8.15	32.58	5.7	
25,001 to 50,000	I.C.S.	1928	128	22.73	2.39	26.90	11.2	
	I.C.S.	1932	97	27.99	2.92	28.60	9.5	5.2
	W.I.	Combined	23	45.00	7.54	35.39	7.7	
10,001 to 25,000	I.C.S.	1928	157	22.71	2.15	26.90	13.7	
	I.C.S.	1932	135	25.15	2.39	27.70	13.3	7.4
	W.I.	Combined	40	43.75	5.66	35.37	13.3	
5,001 to 10,000	I.C.S.	1928	85	21.98	2.57	23.68	7.4	
	I.C.S.	1932	94	33.09	3.35	32.27	9.2	4.8
	W.I.	Combined	23	18.91	3.37	15.81	7.7	
2,501 to 5,000	I.C.S.	1928	89	18.60	2.32	21.74	7.8	
	I.C.S.	1932	87	28.91	3.24	30.07	8.6	3.8
	W.I.	Combined	27	40.56	6.76	34.46	9.0	
1,001 to 2,500	I.C.S.	1928	85	20.18	2.78	25.47	7.4	
	I.C.S.	1932	84	25.83	2.83	25.74	8.3	3.9
	W.I.	Combined	30	40.00	6.34	34.13	10.0	
1,000 or less	I.C.S.	1928	125	19.08	2.02	22.49	10.9	
	I.C.S.	1932	125	20.36	2.20	24.48	12.3	40.0
	W.I.	Combined	60	40.83	4.71	36.16	20.0	

25,000 to 50,000 (mean  $24 \pm 2$ ). On the other hand, Women's Institute enrollees from sparsely populated areas show a relatively high percentage of lessons completed (mean  $41 \pm 5$ ) as compared with women enrolled from cities of over 100,000 population (mean  $36 \pm 4$ ).

## SEX OF ENROLLEES

Table III shows that women who are studying courses related to the home (dressmaking, cooking, and the like), such as the courses offered by the Women's Institute, complete a higher proportion of the lessons in their courses (mean  $38 \pm 3$ ) than do the men studying International Correspondence School courses (mean  $24 \pm 8$ ). When women study courses in the same school with the men, however, their relative completion of lessons is somewhat less than that of the men (mean  $21 \pm 3$ ). It should be added that when women sign up for courses in the International Correspondence Schools it is usually for courses in the commercial field (book-keeping, stenography, accounting, and the like).

TABLE III

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY THE MEN AND WOMEN OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932

Sex	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Men	I.C.S.	1928 .....	1074	21.11	0.75	24.59
	I.C.S.	1932 .....	952	26.14	0.91	28.17
Women	I.C.S.	1928 .....	70	18.57	2.76	22.93
	I.C.S.	1932 .....	64	24.22	3.28	26.06
Women	W.I.	1928 .....	208	37.40	2.32	33.37
	W.I.	1932 .....	92	38.15	3.66	34.95

## MARITAL STATUS OF ENROLLEES

The International Correspondence Schools do not include in their records any indication of the marital status of the enrollees. The Women's Institute data reveal that this factor probably has

considerable bearing on relative completion of their courses. Interview replies of men who enrolled in the International Correspondence Schools indicated a slight possibility of the opposite effect to that indicated in Table IV, which is due to the "pressure of home duties."

Married women tend to complete a larger percentage of the lessons in the Women's Institute courses for which they enroll (mean  $46 \pm 5$ ) than do single women (mean  $30 \pm 4$ ), according to the data in Table IV.

TABLE IV

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY SINGLE, MARRIED, AND WIDOWED WOMEN OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF ENROLLEES OF THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932

Marital Status	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Single	W.I.	1928 . . . . .	85	25.94	3.05	27.98
	W.I.	1932 . . . . .	64	34.22	4.29	34.02
Married	W.I.	1928 . . . . .	116	44.66	3.24	34.81
	W.I.	1932 . . . . .	24	48.33	7.84	37.60
Widowed	W.I.	1928 . . . . .	6	.....	.....	.....
	W.I.	1932 . . . . .	2	.....	.....	.....

In 1928 the married women taking Women's Institute courses completed a mean percentage of 44.66 lessons in the courses for which they enrolled as compared with a mean percentage of 25.94 lessons completed by single women; this is a significant difference, as the ratio of the difference to the standard error is 18.72 to 4.45, or more than 4 to 1. The better record of lessons completed by the single women in 1932 reduced the difference that year to a non-significant ratio: married women completed a mean of 48.33 per cent of the lessons in their courses, and single women completed a mean of 34.22 per cent, which shows a ratio of difference to the standard error of the difference of 14.11 to 8.94, or less than 2 to 1. It appears that the single women who enrolled during the economic and employment difficulties of 1932 were definitely more persistent



students than the single women who enrolled during the relatively prosperous year of 1928. This variation between the two years is evident again when the ratios between the differences and the standard errors of the difference between the means of the married and single women are compared with the means for the entire sampling of the Women's Institut  for the two years: here we find ratios of 7.26 to 3.98 for the 1928 married women and 10.18 to 8.65 for the 1932 married women; — 11.46 to 3.83 for the 1928 single women and — 3.93 to 5.64 for the 1932 single women. It will be noted that the only significant difference is in the record of the 1928 single women, for the mean percentage of lessons completed by this group was three times the standard error of the difference less than the mean percentage of lessons completed by all the women who enrolled in the Women's Institute that year.

There is a complete reversal in the proportion of married to single women enrolled in the Women's Institute in 1932 as compared with 1928; in the relatively prosperous year 56 per cent of the enrollees were married and 41 per cent were single women, whereas in 1932 only 26 per cent were married and 70 per cent were single women, according to the sampling. In other words, while the Women's Institute was undergoing a considerable loss in enrollment during the four-year period, the loss was limited mainly to the married women.

#### AGE OF ENROLLEES

Table V and Diagram I disclose that there are three age periods within which enrollees accomplish consistently better completion of lessons in courses than in other periods: the over 48 years group has a mean of  $34 \pm 10$  for 1928, and the scant number of cases for 1932 indicate a much higher mean for that year; the 17 to 20 years group has a mean of  $24 \pm 2$  for 1928 and  $33 \pm 2$  for 1932; and the 29 to 32 years group shows means of  $24 \pm 3$  for 1928 and  $26 \pm 3$  for 1932. The means for each age group show a consistently higher percentage of lessons completed for the 1932 "depression year" sampling than for the 1928 "prosperity year" sampling, except for the group of enrollees ranging in age from 37 to 40 years.

TABLE V

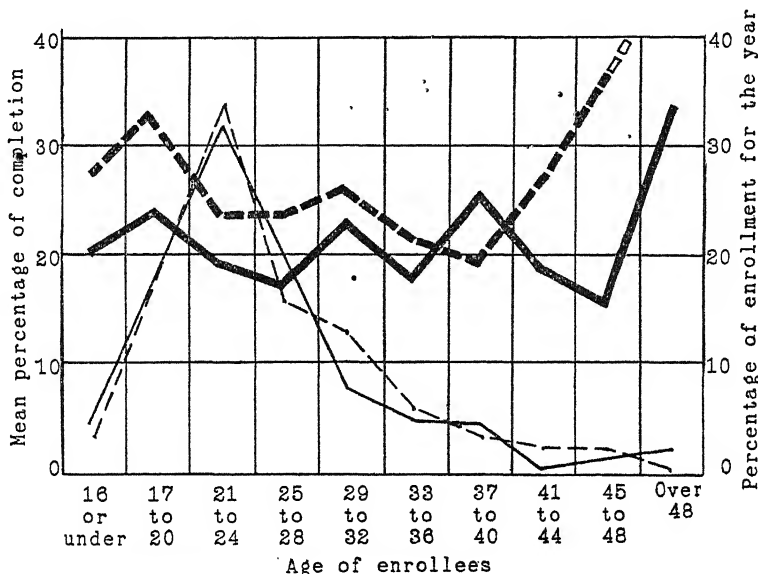
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY AGE OF THE PERSONS AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Age	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Over 48	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	11	34.09	10.31	32.60
		1932 . . . .	4	.....	.....	.....
45 to 48	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	9	15.00	10.00	28.28
		1932 . . . .	10	37.00	8.41	25.22
41 to 44	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	16	19.38	7.53	29.14
		1932 . . . .	28	26.07	5.50	28.60
37 to 40	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	45	25.67	4.90	32.48
		1932 . . . .	44	19.73	3.61	23.69
33 to 36	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	73	17.74	2.54	21.60
		1932 . . . .	64	22.19	3.32	26.37
29 to 32	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	107	23.69	2.63	27.04
		1932 . . . .	126	25.64	2.63	29.43
25 to 28	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	236	18.18	1.42	21.76
		1932 . . . .	180	23.78	2.01	26.93
21 to 24	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	358	20.08	1.27	24.01
		1932 . . . .	341	23.42	1.34	24.78
17 to 20	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	220	24.32	1.74	25.83
		1932 . . . .	173	33.67	2.45	32.11
16 or under	I.C.S.	1928 . . . .	46	20.65	3.18	21.33
		1932 . . . .	25	27.40	5.36	26.27

Another element that is clearly shown in Diagram I is that the greatest number of enrollments is secured from persons ranging in age from 21 to 24 years; here the mode reaches a peak (31% of the total enrollment for 1928 and 33% of the 1932 enrollment) very much higher than the next largest age group, that of enrollees from 25 to 28 years (21% of the 1928 enrollment and 18% of the 1932 one). The mean age of persons at the time of enrollment for the entire 1928 sampling is  $24.7 \pm 2.1$  years and for the 1932 sampling it is  $25.2 \pm 2.2$  years.

DIAGRAM I

MEAN PERCENTAGE OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY ENROLLEES OF VARIOUS AGE GROUPS OF A SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932 COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL ENROLLMENTS OF THE AGE GROUPS



Key: ——— Mean percentage of completion, 1928  
 - - - - - Mean percentage of completion, 1932  
 ——— Percentage of enrollments, 1928  
 - - - - - Percentage of enrollments, 1932

#### EDUCATION OF ENROLLEES

Of the records available for this study, the only ones showing the educational preparation of the enrollees are those of the International Correspondence Schools for 1932. These data, given in Table VI, are not sufficient to show the proportion of people with various specific educational backgrounds that enrolled. They do indicate, as might be expected, that the men with a high school or college education tend to be more persistent in studying their courses than the men with only grammar school preparation. The largest percentage of lessons were completed by men with a "Technical School" preparation.

TABLE VI

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS OF SIMILAR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1932

Education	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
College	I.C.S.	1932 ...	60	27.00	3.66	28.10
Technical school	I.C.S.	1932 ...	14	32.86	9.56	34.47
High school	I.C.S.	1932 ...	293	29.16	1.69	28.91
Grammar school	I.C.S.	1932 ...	198	22.88	1.85	25.97
Commercial school	I.C.S.	1932 ...	4	.....	.....	.....
Foreign school	I.C.S.	1932 ...	2	.....	.....	.....
Unknown	I.C.S.	1932 ...	445	.....	.....	.....

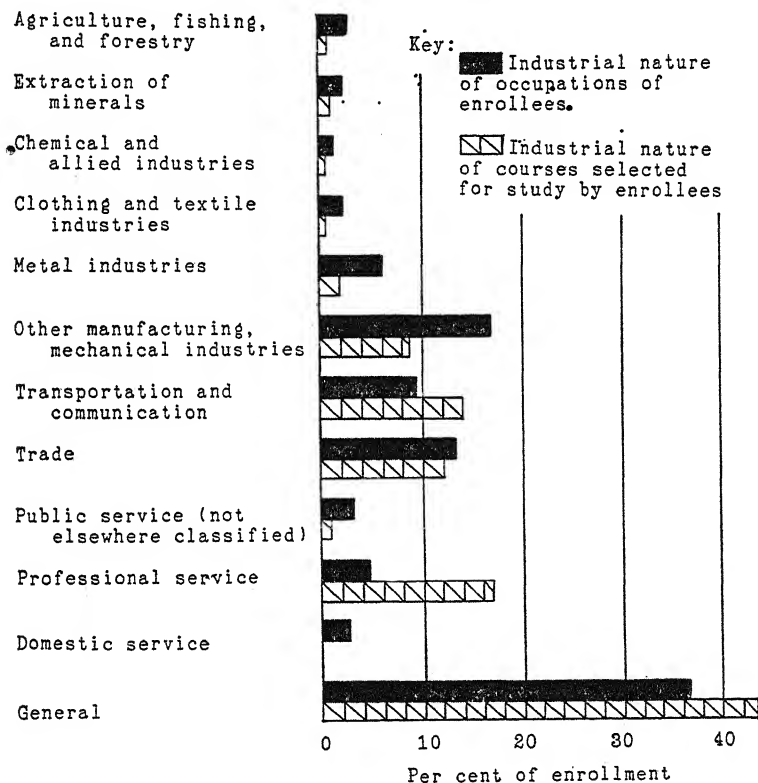
## OCCUPATION OF ENROLLEES

So far as possible the occupations of the enrollees were classified according to the plan used by the United States Census for 1930. This was not possible in all cases, as the occupation of the enrollees occasionally was not mentioned on the record cards, and other cards bore statements too indefinite or too general for classification. According to the data in Diagram II, one of the smallest number of enrollments came from the miners, the group the International Correspondence Schools were originally organized to serve. The highest percentages of enrollments came from the manufacturing and mechanical industries, followed closely by tradesmen and by persons engaged in work identified with transportation and communication. The occupations of one-third of the enrollees had to be placed in the general classification because of lack of clarity in the records or lack of definite occupation of the enrollee at the time of enrollment. (Unemployed persons and high school pupils were included in this general classification.)

Relative completion of courses by the different occupational groups is shown in Table VII and indicates that there are greater differences between the prosperous and depression years within a single group than between different occupational groups. The enrollees engaged in industries involving the manufacture or use

DIAGRAM II

PERCENTAGES OF INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED BY OCCUPATIONS OF A SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932, COMPARED WITH PERCENTAGES OF INDUSTRIES FOR WHICH THE COURSES SELECTED WERE DESIGNED TO PREPARE



of textiles show a generally lower average completion of lessons (means of percentages of lessons completed in courses: 1928,  $19 \pm 5$ ; 1932,  $15 \pm 4$ ) than most of the other occupational groups, and the professional classification has the best record (means: 1928,  $25 \pm 4$ ; 1932,  $38 \pm 6$ ).

Courses also were classified according to the industrial nature of the occupation for which they are designed to prepare. Here again it was impossible to classify accurately all courses, so many of them were placed in an "Unclassified" group as they dealt

TABLE VII

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY THE INDUSTRIAL NATURE OF THE OCCUPATION IN WHICH THEY WERE WORKING AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Nature of Occupation	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution	Per Cent of Sample	Per Cent of Occupied Male Workers
Agriculture	I.C.S.	1928	28	20.71	4.75	24.70	2.4	
		1932	39	29.87	5.36	33.04	3.8	25.1
Mining	I.C.S.	1928	23	15.44	4.19	19.67	2.0	
		1932	10	29.00	11.76	35.27	1.0	2.6
Chemistry	I.C.S.	1928	95	25.63	2.91	28.20	8.3	
		1932	63	22.94	2.83	22.27	6.2	
Weaving	I.C.S.	1928	17	19.12	4.93	19.72	1.5	
		1932	22	14.55	3.97	18.21	2.2	
Mechanics	I.C.S.	1928	81	19.57	2.36	21.14	7.1	32.1
		1932	41	31.83	4.46	28.24	4.0	
Other manufacturing	I.C.S.	1928	119	19.79	2.19	23.83	10.4	
		1932	98	30.51	3.30	32.49	9.6	
Transportation and communication	I.C.S.	1928	104	24.14	2.87	29.16	9.1	9.4
		1932	96	20.63	2.74	26.72	9.4	
Trades	I.C.S.	1928	128	18.20	1.82	20.50	11.2	
		1932	159	21.10	1.91	24.03	15.6	13.4
Special public service	I.C.S.	1928	31	26.61	5.35	29.30	2.7	
		1932	35	22.71	4.12	24.03	3.4	2.2
Professional	I.C.S.	1928	56	25.00	3.66	27.12	4.9	
		1932	35	38.14	5.60	32.67	3.4	4.5
Domestic service	I.C.S.	1928	28	16.43	4.65	24.16	2.4	
		1932	43	24.77	3.89	25.20	4.2	4.7
Unclassified	I.C.S.	1928	434	20.67	1.16	24.04	37.9	5.4
		1932	374	27.78	1.47	28.47	36.8	0.7

with subject matter of general value not limited to any one industry. Other than this general "Unclassified" group the largest number of enrollees selected professional courses, mainly in engineering, with the second largest group selecting courses giving instruction in the transportation and communication occupations, followed by courses related to the trades. It was possible to classify positively 165 enrollees in 1928 and 126 in 1932 (13.4% of the enrollment for the two years) who were taking courses definitely associated with the occupation in which they were employed at the time of enrollment. Here it will be noted that the mean percentage of lessons completed by this group (mean  $22 \pm 2$ ) is not appreciably higher than that for groups showing no such relationship between occupation and the course chosen for study.

The item at the bottom of Table VIII shows that, in the samplings selected for this study, there were 490 persons in 1928 and

TABLE VIII

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932 WHO SELECTED COURSES OF THE SAME INDUSTRIAL NATURE AS THE OCCUPATION IN WHICH THEY WERE WORKING AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Occupation and Course of Same Industrial Nature	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Chemists	I.C.S.	1928 ...	42	19.76	4.03	25.84
	I.C.S.	1932 ...	23	20.21	4.35	20.40
Weavers	I.C.S.	1932 ...	8	23.75	10.08	26.67
Mechanics	I.C.S.	1928 ...	10	21.00	4.52	13.57
Transportation and communication	I.C.S.	1928 ...	43	20.81	4.12	26.70
	I.C.S.	1932 ...	38	19.21	3.73	22.67
Trades	I.C.S.	1928 ...	39	26.03	4.53	27.90
	I.C.S.	1932 ...	42	22.86	4.05	25.96
Professional	I.C.S.	1928 ...	11	18.64	3.38	10.68
All groups	I.C.S.	1928 ...	165	22.27	2.01	25.78
	I.C.S.	1932 ...	126	21.98	2.19	24.50
Courses specially ar- ranged for enrollees	I.C.S.	1928 ...	490	21.51	1.13	25.05
	I.C.S.	1932 ...	437	27.24	1.37	28.58

437 in 1932 who were enrolled for specially arranged courses. The investigator inspected the records of several of these special courses and found that they consisted, for the most part, of only the portions of longer courses that the enrollees believed were necessary to solve their special problems. In most cases, the special courses were made up of portions of single courses, but in some instances the selection was made from several longer courses; for example, a man entering the retail radio business might select six lessons from the Radio Servicing Course, four lessons from the Salesmanship Course, and two lessons on fundamentals of window display from the Advertising Course. The special courses are, in the main, adjustments within standardized courses in an attempt to meet the needs and interests of enrollees; apparently adjustments to the varied abilities of the enrollees are indirect, except for a vast number of supplementary lessons prepared to meet special difficulties that students have with portions of the published courses, together with criticisms, advice, and suggestions given to individual enrollees by the instructors. This unexpectedly high proportion of attempts to meet the needs of the persons whom the International Correspondence Schools are serving deserves the sincere approbation of all educators; few schools, other than the most progressive ones, can show a record of 42.9 per cent of their students taking courses adapted to their special needs or interests. This special arrangement, however, seems to have had little effect on relative completion of courses in 1928 (mean  $21.5 \pm 1.1$ ), although the 1932 group shows improvement (mean  $27.3 \pm 1.4$ ).

#### ABILITY LEVEL OF ENROLLEES

In the absence of intelligence test scores or other ability ratings, the problem of the relationship between the occupations of the enrollees and the ability level of the courses they select for study was attacked from another angle. Tables directly or indirectly indicating ability level of occupations were laid out according to seven scales. The scales of Sims,<sup>3</sup> Taussig,<sup>4</sup> and Hollingworth<sup>5</sup> used only five steps indicating levels of ability, whereas the scales

<sup>3</sup> V. M. Sims, *The Measurement of Socio-economic Status*, p. 33. 1928.

<sup>4</sup> F. W. Taussig, *Principles of Economics*, pp. 134-138. 1911.

<sup>5</sup> H. L. Hollingworth, *Vocational Psychology and Character Analysis*, p. 409. 1929.



of Fryer,<sup>6</sup> Barr,<sup>7</sup> Army Alpha,<sup>8</sup> and the Adult Division of the Cleveland Public Schools<sup>9</sup> used much narrower divisions, ranging up to 164 points. Each of the seven scales was adjusted to a position of "best fit," as indicated by individual occupations appearing on several of them. It was then discovered that, although there was considerable agreement in placement of occupations among them,<sup>10</sup> there were many rather wide variations in scales attempting a narrow definition of ability level. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it was decided to use a six-step ability level scale based on the rather wide groupings suggested by Taussig, and guided by the narrower definitions of others, particularly the Barr Scale of Occupational Intelligence. Each of the occupations and courses that could be definitely identified was graded according to the ability level scale. It is interesting to note that subsequent to the development and application of the ability level scale used in this study it was found that the final form was not unlike the six-step occupational classification of the Minnesota Occupational Intelligence Scale used in the investigation by Bird and Paterson.<sup>11</sup>

The grouping of enrollees by ability level of occupations, as shown in Table IX, reveals that by far the largest percentage (42%) of enrollees comes from occupations requiring skilled workers. Although there is considerable difference in relative completion of lessons in courses between the highest and lowest ability groups, there is no regular improvement in persistence of study between lower and higher levels of the intermediate divisions, which seems to indicate that except for the extremes in ability, as indicated by the occupations in which the enrollees are engaged, an enrollee from a higher occupational level is no more

<sup>6</sup> P. M. Symonds, *Diagnosing Personality and Conduct*, pp. 540-541. 1931.

<sup>7</sup> L. M. Terman, et al., *Genetic Studies of Genius*, Vol. I, p. 66 ff. 1926.

<sup>8</sup> R. M. Yerkes, editor, *National Academy of Science Memoirs*, Vol. XV, pp. 819 ff. 1921.

<sup>9</sup> A. G. Grace, "Education of Adults," p. 213. 1929.

<sup>10</sup> In the case of the Barr and Fryer scales, the correlation between comparable occupations was found to be .89.

<sup>11</sup> C. Bird and D. G. Paterson, "Commercial Correspondence Courses and Occupational Adjustments of Men." *Bulletin of the Employment Stabilization Research Institute, University of Minnesota*, Vol. II, No. 7, p. 18. 1934.

TABLE IX

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED ACCORDING TO ABILITY LEVEL OF THE OCCUPATION IN WHICH THEY WERE WORKING AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Ability Level of Occupation	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
1. Lowest types of occupations	I.C.S.	1928 ...	136	18.24	1.92	22.29
		1932 ...	90	19.44	2.24	21.14
2. Semi-skilled occupations		1928 ...	176	22.27	1.88	24.81
		1932 ...	130	24.39	2.26	25.68
3. Skilled occupations		1928 ...	491	21.09	1.15	25.56
		1932 ...	423	25.73	1.41	28.90
4. Clerical occupations		1928 ...	174	20.29	1.81	23.77
		1932 ...	180	23.50	1.80	24.14
5. Advanced clerical and semi-professional occupations		1928 ...	54	24.63	3.49	25.38
		1932 ...	42	31.67	4.95	31.67
6. Advanced professional occupations		1928 Com- 1932 bined	11	28.64	10.56	33.38
All levels when occupation and course are balanced		1928 ...	288	22.57	1.52	25.73
		1932 ...	258	28.88	1.93	30.89

likely to complete a course than a man from a lower level. Even the apparently wide difference in accomplishment of enrollees at the extremes in ability level proves to be of only slight and not clearly significant difference, for the ratio of the difference to the standard error of the difference between the mean percentages of lessons completed in courses by day laborers and semi-professional persons in 1932 is 12.23 to 5.43 or only slightly more than 2 to 1.

During both years with which this investigation is concerned, about 25 per cent of the enrollees studied courses preparing for occupations on the same ability level as the work in which they were engaged at the time of enrollment. This group shows only a slight improvement in the mean percentages of lessons com-

pleted (means: 1928,  $22.6 \pm 1.5$ ; 1932,  $28.9 \pm 1.9$ ) over the means of the general groups (means: 1928,  $21.1 \pm 0.7$ ; 1932,  $26.2 \pm 1.1$ ).

When coefficients of contingency are derived for the ability levels of the occupations of the enrollees at the time of enrollment and the ability levels of the courses they select for study, a very substantial relationship is revealed: the coefficient of contingency between these two factors for the 1928 group is .394 with a P. E. of .028, and for the 1932 group it is .341 with a P. E. of .024. The actual relationship is probably greater than the above figures indicate, as they do not take into account the special courses arranged for nearly a third of the enrollees each year—courses adjusted to the interests and needs of the enrollees—and it is likely that there is concomitantly some adjustment to the ability of the enrollees.

#### COURSE SELECTION BY AGE OF ENROLLEES

Table X shows that, excepting the "not specified" courses, the younger enrollees tend to select courses preparing for the professional services, whereas the older enrollees show a preference for other courses, such as those preparing for trades or transportation and communication occupations. This is illustrated in the 1932 group, where about 22 per cent of the enrollees between the ages of 17 and 20 selected courses preparing for professional services (particularly engineering), whereas only 16 per cent of the enrollees between the ages of 37 and 40 selected professional courses and 30 per cent selected courses in transportation and communication. In the above classifications of percentages of enrollment by occupations the ratio of the difference to its standard error is 6.6 to 6.4 for the professional classification and 12.2 to 9.4 for the transportation and communication group, showing that in 1932 the chances were eighty-four in a hundred that enrollees of about 18 years of age were more likely to select courses preparing for professional careers than enrollees of about 38 years of age; and the chances were ninety in a hundred that the older group would be more likely to select courses in transportation and communication than would the younger group.

TABLE

PERCENTAGES OF ENROLLEES OF VARIOUS AGES IN A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS  
WHO CHOSE COURSES DESIGNED TO PREPARE FOR PARTICIPATION IN

Age Groups	Year	No. of Cases	Percentage of Total			
			Agric- ulture Forestry Fishing	Mining	Chemistry and Allied Industries	Clothing and Textiles
Unknown	1928 .....	23	...	...	8.7	...
	1932 .....	21	9.5	...	9.5	...
16 and under	1928 .....	46	...	...	4.4	...
	1932 .....	25	...	...	...	4.0
17 to 20	1928 .....	218	1.4	.5	6.9	.9
	1932 .....	173	1.2	...	2.3	1.2
21 to 24	1928 .....	362	.6	.6	9.7	.6
	1932 .....	341	1.2	...	4.4	.6
25 to 28	1928 .....	235	.9	.4	10.6	...
	1932 .....	180	.6	1.1	10.6	.6
29 to 32	1928 .....	106	.9	.9	15.1	1.9
	1932 .....	126	.8	...	4.0	2.4
33 to 36	1928 .....	73	4.1	...	8.2	4.1
	1932 .....	64	1.6	1.6	6.3	...
37 to 40	1928 .....	45	...	...	6.7	4.4
	1932 .....	44	...	...	9.1	...
41 to 44	1928 .....	16	6.3	...	12.5	...
	1932 .....	28	...	3.6	...	...
45 to 48	1928 .....	9	...	...	...	...
	1932 .....	10	...	...	20.0	...
Over 48	1928 .....	11	9.1	...	27.3	...
	1932 .....	4	...	...	...	...

Table XI shows very little difference in the 1928 group between the mean age of the enrollees selecting courses requiring lowest ability (24.4 years) and highest ability (24.5 years). Contingency coefficients reveal a small but significant negative correlation between the ages of enrollees and the ability levels of the courses they select for study (the C for 1928 is  $-.150$  with a P. E. of  $.021$  and the C for 1932 is  $-.232$  with a P. E. of  $.023$ ),

## X

WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932,  
OCCUPATIONS INCLUDED IN CERTAIN INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

## Enrollment in Courses Associated with Industrial Classifications

Metals Ma- chinery Vehicles	Manufac- turing and Mechani- cal In- dustries	Trans- portation and Communi- cations	Trade	Special Public Services	Profes- sional Services	Domestic and Personal Services	Not Specified
21.7	...	4.4	8.7	...	...	...	56.5
4.8	4.8	4.8	14.3	...	9.5	...	42.9
8.7	4.4	10.9	4.4	...	17.4	...	50.0
...	...	16.0	8.0	...	24.0	...	48.0
3.7	1.4	12.4	7.8	...	18.8	...	46.3
...	1.7	17.3	11.0	.6	22.5	...	42.2
1.4	1.7	13.0	11.3	...	21.3	...	40.0
1.8	3.0	15.2	13.8	...	17.9	...	42.2
1.7	2.1	13.6	10.2	.4	18.7	...	41.2
.6	2.2	12.8	15.5	...	16.1	...	40.0
.9	4.7	12.3	8.5	1.0	11.3	...	42.4
...	.8	15.9	19.0	.8	11.1	.8	44.4
1.4	1.4	16.4	6.9	...	15.1	...	42.4
...	1.6	20.3	12.5	...	7.8	...	48.4
2.2	2.2	15.6	13.3	...	13.3	...	42.2
2.3	...	29.5	4.5	...	15.9	...	38.6
...	...	...	12.5	...	12.5	...	56.3
...	3.6	17.9	17.9	...	3.6	...	53.6
...	...	11.1	...	...	33.3	...	55.6
...	...	...	10.0	...	...	...	70.0
...	...	9.1	...	...	27.3	...	27.3
...	...	25.0	25.0	...	...	...	50.0

indicating a slight tendency for younger persons to select courses requiring a greater degree of ability than the courses selected by older enrollees.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter an effort has been made to discover whether or not such readily observable characteristics of enrollees as

TABLE XI

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE AGES OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS' COURSES IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY ABILITY LEVEL OF THE OCCUPATIONS FOR WHICH THE COURSES ARE DESIGNED TO PREPARE

Ability Level of Course as Indicated by Occupation for Which It Prepares	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Age	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Semi-skilled	I.C.S.	1928 ...	10	24.40	1.60	4.80
Skilled	I.C.S.	1928 ...	410	25.18	0.34	6.92
Clerical	I.C.S.	1928 ...	265	24.34	0.44	7.08
Advanced clerical	I.C.S.	1928 ...	210	23.54	0.40	5.83
Professional	I.C.S.	1928 ...	139	24.45	0.50	5.83
Semi-skilled	I.C.S.	1932 ...	8	28.00	2.83	7.48
Skilled	I.C.S.	1932 ...	341	25.74	0.38	6.99
Clerical	I.C.S.	1932 ...	273	24.39	0.41	6.72
Advanced clerical	I.C.S.	1932 ...	151	24.41	0.47	5.79
Professional	I.C.S.	1932 ...	110	24.73	0.57	5.93

geographical situation, sex, marital status, age, education, occupation, or ability have any noteworthy effect on their choice of subjects for study or persistency of study of courses in the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute. It is shown that enrollees from rural communities, where educational opportunities are usually meager, are no more persistent in studying correspondence courses than are enrollees from more densely populated areas. Women are more persistent in studying correspondence courses related to homemaking than are men studying vocational courses. The distribution of persistency of study with age of enrollees appears to be tri-modal, the best study records being made by students approximately fifty, nineteen, and thirty years old, in the order given. About 43 per cent of the enrollees select courses more or less adapted to their individual needs and interests, and about 25 per cent select courses on the same ability level as the work at which they are engaged at the time of enrollment; but in neither of these groups does the relationship between the course and the work or interests

of the enrollees appreciably increase their persistence in studying the courses.

Two general conclusions are evident from the data in this chapter: (a) sex and occupation are the only factors considered that have a major effect on the nature of the correspondence courses selected for study, although age appears to have a minor effect; and (b) none of the more readily observable characteristics of enrollees considered in this study are of great value in predicting their persistence in the study of correspondence courses. There is, however, some indication that a knowledge of the educational background and ability level of the enrollees might, at least in the case of extremes, be of value. This latter conclusion is of significance for the correspondence schools, as refusal to accept the lowest levels of ability and education would relieve them of such criticisms as the following, offered by Bird and Paterson: "An important cause of the excessively high mortality is the failure on the part of these schools to select men with sufficient ability to pursue the courses offered or to give adequate vocational counsel."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> C. Bird and D. G. Paterson, "Commercial Correspondence Courses and Occupational Adjustments of Men." *Bulletin of the Employment Stabilization Research Institute, University of Minnesota*, Vol. II, No. 7, p. 27. 1934.

## CHAPTER IV

### SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION

THIS chapter deals with selected characteristics of the administration of the courses offered by the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute that are so closely associated with the experiences of the enrollees that some consideration of their effects is unavoidable. Attention is given to (1) the payments for correspondence courses, (2) the marks received by enrollees on work submitted to the instructors, (3) the length of courses for which people enroll, (4) the effect of letters reporting enrollees' progress with courses sent to employers or teachers, and (5) the result of allowing enrollees to change to different courses of study from the ones in which they first enroll.

#### PAYMENTS FOR COURSES

The cost of courses in the International Correspondence Schools varies from less than \$10 to over \$300. In the Women's Institute the cost is from \$15 to \$135. In the International Correspondence Schools the mean cost of courses for which the 1928 sampling enrolled was  $\$122.68 \pm 1.29$  and for the 1932 sampling it was  $\$118.86 \pm 1.71$ , according to the data in Table XII. However, the amount actually paid by enrollees in this institution was represented by a mean of  $\$67.58 \pm 1.56$  for 1928, and  $\$55.20 \pm 1.65$  for 1932. The Women's Institute shows a similar discrepancy between cost of courses and amounts actually paid: in 1928 the women enrollees were billed for a mean cost per course of  $\$54.47 \pm 1.35$  and paid only  $\$31.59 \pm 1.78$ ; in 1932 they signed up for courses with a mean valuation of  $\$57.17 \pm 1.98$ , but made only a mean payment of  $\$24.78 \pm 2.44$  for their courses.

A comparison of the percentage of lessons completed in courses with the percentage of fees paid shows a Pearson  $r$  of .484 with



TABLE XII

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF FEES CHARGED FOR COURSES AND AMOUNTS ACTUALLY PAID BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932

Classification	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Error of Mean	Standard Deviation of Distribution
Sampling 1						
Fee charged	I.C.S.	1928 ...	1,144	\$122.68	1.29	43.55
Amount paid	I.C.S.	1928 ...	1,144	67.58	1.56	52.68
Sampling 2						
Fee Charged	I.C.S.	1932 ...	1,016	118.86	1.71	54.61
Amount paid	I.C.S.	1932 ...	1,016	55.20	1.65	52.72
Sampling 3						
Fee charged	W.I.	1928 ...	208	54.47	1.35	19.45
Amount paid	W.I.	1928 ...	208	31.59	1.78	25.58
Sampling 4						
Fee charged	W.I.	1932 ...	92	57.17	1.97	18.81
Amount paid	W.I.	1932 ...	92	24.78	2.44	23.27

a standard deviation of .023 for the International Correspondence Schools group that enrolled in 1928, and an  $r$  of .472 with a standard deviation of .024 for the 1932 group, while the Women's Institute enrollees show, for the two years combined, an  $r$  of .467 with a standard deviation of .045. These correlations indicate a relationship between the proportion of the courses completed and the proportion of the cost of the courses actually paid by the enrollees. This relationship is distinctly to the credit of the school, for the contract signed by each enrollee authorizes the school to collect the full amount of the fee for the course, regardless of how much is studied by the enrollee.

During the enrollee interviews it was suggested that perhaps the correspondence schools used more coercion to secure fees from the lower, poorer classes of workers than from the more advanced groups. In Table XIII a progressive increase in percentage of fees paid is indicated, with the lowest percentage paid by the day laborer class of worker (means: 1928,  $48.6 \pm 3.4$ ; 1932,  $36.4 \pm 3.8$ ) and the highest percentage paid by the pro-

TABLE XIII

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF FEES PAID FOR COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED IN ABILITY LEVELS AS INDICATED BY OCCUPATIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Ability Level of Occupations of Enrollees	School	Year	Num- ber of Cases	Mean of Per Cent of Fee Paid	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Lowest .....	I.C.S.	1928	136	48.68	3.38	39.26
Semi-skilled .....			175	54.20	2.85	37.61
Skilled .....			493	54.07	1.74	38.49
Clerical .....			175	60.60	2.80	36.95
Advanced clerical ..			54	65.19	4.75	34.61
Professional .....			6	...	...	...
Lowest .....	I.C.S.	1932	90	36.44	3.81	35.92
Semi-skilled .....			130	42.46	3.30	37.53
Skilled .....			423	47.03	1.90	39.03
Clerical .....			180	47.61	2.81	37.63
Advanced clerical ..			43	63.37	5.66	36.66
Professional .....			5	...	...	...
Professional 1928 and 1932 combined ..			11	54.09	12.17	38.48

professional class of worker (means: 1928,  $65.2 \pm 4.8$ ; 1932,  $63.4 \pm 5.7$ ). The coefficients of contingency show a relationship between the ability level of the enrollees' occupation and the percentage of fees paid of .211 with a P. E. of .021 for the 1928 group, and .258 with a P. E. of .023 for the 1932 group, indicating a small but significant tendency for the lower, poorer classes of workmen to pay a smaller percentage of the fees for their correspondence courses than the classes of workers generally receiving higher incomes.

Table XIV indicates that there may be some relationship between the method of payment for courses and the persistency of study of the enrollees. Persons who pay cash complete a larger proportion of their courses (means: I.C.S., 1928,  $33.3 \pm 2.7$ ; 1932,  $40.1 \pm 3.7$ ; and W.I., 1928 and 1932 combined,  $65.0 \pm 8.8$ ) than people who make only small monthly payments (means:

TABLE XIV

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY THE PLAN OF PAYMENT FOR THEIR COURSES

Plan for Payment	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Cash	I.C.S.	1928 ....	126	33.33	2.66	29.70
	I.C.S.	1932 ....	68	40.15	3.71	30.37
	W.I.	Comb. ..	14	65.00	8.77	31.62
\$1 to \$5 per month	I.C.S.	1928 ....	632	19.18	0.94	23.16
	I.C.S.	1932 ....	606	24.32	1.11	27.20
	W.I.	Comb. ..	283	36.63	1.99	33.42
\$6 to \$10 per month	I.C.S.	1928 ....	320	19.91	1.32	23.61
	I.C.S.	1932 ....	265	23.72	1.60	26.02
	W.I.	Comb. ..	2	...	...	...
\$11 to \$90 per month	I.C.S.	1928 ....	49	24.39	3.43	23.77
	I.C.S.	1932 ....	19	30.79	6.98	29.62
	W.I.	Comb. ..	1	...	...	...
Special plans	I.C.S.	1928 ....	17	14.41	3.88	15.52
	I.C.S.	1932 ....	29	26.38	5.65	29.91
Anniversary free scholarships	I.C.S.	1932 ....	29	46.03	6.81	36.04

I.C.S., 1928,  $19.2 \pm 0.9$ ; 1932,  $24.3 \pm 1.1$ ; and W.I., 1928 and 1932 combined,  $36.8 \pm 2.0$ ). The group who were given free courses completed only a relatively small proportion of the lessons in the courses (means: I.C.S., 1928,  $14.4 \pm 3.9$ ; 1932,  $26.4 \pm 5.7$ ). Two factors probably account for this marked difference: (1) the person who pays cash for his course may indicate by this method of payment that he is likely to be systematic in his saving of money and in his habits of study; and (2) the larger the actual amount of money invested by the enrollee, the more likely he is to endeavor to get his money's worth out of the course.

An interesting exception to the conclusions of the foregoing paragraph is the group that was given Fortieth Anniversary

Scholarships in 1932. This group made one of the best records of relative course completions of any group considered in this study (mean:  $46.0\% \pm 6.8$  of the courses). In general, the scholarship recipients were recommended by school administrators or teachers and frequently were high school students or recent alumni. They probably were not only of average or higher ability but undoubtedly more or less supervised and encouraged by the persons who nominated them. The record of this group, one of the few where the difference between its mean and the mean of the entire I.C.S. sampling for the year in which it was included was more than three times the standard error of the difference, makes it particularly significant to those who are interested in the values of supervised correspondence study.

#### MARKS GIVEN BY INSTRUCTORS

With some variations from year to year and in the different departments, the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute give four marks on papers submitted by students, "A," "B," "C," and "W." The first three are given the usual academic interpretation of Excellent, Good, and Fair; the "W" indicates the mark is being withheld and may be interpreted as meaning that the work submitted by the student is not satisfactory.

According to Table XV, the unskilled labor group of workers receive nearly as large a proportion of "A's" (41% in 1928 and 44% in 1932) as the professional and advanced clerical group (46% in 1928 and 56% in 1932). Likewise the variation in percentage of "W's" is not great, the unskilled group receiving fewer "W's" in 1928 (3%) than the professional and advanced clerical group (6%). In general, then, it can be said that the ability level of enrollees, as given in the ability level of occupation scale used in this study (see Table IX, page 28), is no indication of the quality of work that the enrollees will submit to the correspondence school instructors; in other words, as far as marks are an indication of quality of work, the day laborer can be expected to do as good work with the lessons of the course that he selects for correspondence study as the bookkeeper will do with

TABLE XV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ENROLLEES RECEIVING VARIOUS MARKS ON PAPERS LAST SUBMITTED BY THEM FOR CORRECTION, GROUPED BY ABILITY LEVEL AS INDICATED BY OCCUPATIONS AT THE TIME THEY ENROLLED

Nature of Enrollees' Occupations	Year of Enrollment	Marks Given on Papers Last Submitted by Enrollees												
		A		B		C		Withheld		No Papers Sent in by Enrollee		Totals		
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1. Advanced professional	1928 .....	3	50	1	17	1	17	1	17	0	0	0	0	6
	1932 .....	4	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	5	5	5
2. Professional and ad- vanced clerical	1928 .....	25	46	13	24	2	4	3	6	11	20	54	54	54
	1932 .....	24	56	7	16	1	2	1	2	10	23	43	43	43
3. Clerical and semi- professional	1928 .....	73	42	40	23	15	9	5	3	42	24	175	175	175
	1932 .....	77	43	30	17	14	8	7	4	52	29	180	180	180
4. Skilled	1928 .....	222	45	82	17	27	5	15	3	147	30	493	493	493
	1932 .....	217	51	59	14	19	4	18	4	110	26	423	423	423
5. Semi-skilled	1928 .....	79	45	34	19	12	7	10	6	40	23	175	175	175
	1932 .....	67	52	18	14	7	5	7	5	31	24	130	130	130
6. Lowest types	1928 .....	56	41	25	18	10	7	4	3	41	30	136	136	136
	1932 .....	40	44	13	14	2	2	4	4	31	34	90	90	90
7. Unknown and un- classified	1928 .....	34	32	24	23	10	10	14	13	23	22	105	105	105
	1932 .....	82	57	21	14	10	7	11	8	21	14	145	145	145
Totals	1928 .....	492		219		77		52		304		1,144	1,144	1,144
	1932 .....	511		148		53		48		256		1,016	1,016	1,016

TABLE XVI

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY THE MARKS GIVEN ON THE FINAL PAPERS SUBMITTED BY THEM TO THE CORRESPONDENCE INSTRUCTORS

Final Mark	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
A	I.C.S.	1928 .....	489	28.31	1.26	27.80
	I.C.S.	1932 .....	513	34.71	1.35	30.52
	W.I.	Comb. ....	125	51.48	3.01	33.47
B	I.C.S.	1928 .....	219	26.92	1.78	26.31
	I.C.S.	1932 .....	148	28.18	2.03	24.63
	W.I.	Comb. ....	60	47.83	4.23	32.46
C	I.C.S.	1928 .....	77	21.62	2.52	21.96
	I.C.S.	1932 .....	53	33.30	3.74	26.97
	W.I.	Comb. ....	17	46.18	7.17	28.67
Withheld	I.C.S.	1928 .....	52	22.89	2.57	18.33
	I.C.S.	1932 .....	48	29.79	4.10	28.14
	W.I.	Comb. ....	24	34.58	5.43	26.06

the course of his choice. This gives added significance to the conclusion of the preceding chapter, to the effect that it was not feasible to predict successful completion of correspondence courses by means of any of the more readily observable characteristics of the enrollees.

The quality of the marks given by the correspondence instructors has a significant effect on the continuance of enrollee interest in study, as shown in Table XVI, the standard error of the difference of persons receiving "A" being less than one-third the actual difference between the means of the percentages of lessons completed in courses by the samplings of enrollees for the two years with which this study is concerned. The possibility is indicated here that the present policy of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute in giving a large number of high marks may be of value in encouraging enrollee persistence in studying correspondence courses.

TABLE XVII

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE NUMBER OF LESSONS IN COURSES, THE NUMBER OF LESSONS SENT TO THE ENROLLEES, AND THE NUMBER OF LESSONS RETURNED FOR CORRECTION BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932

	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean No. of Lessons	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Number of lessons in courses	I.C.S.	1928	1,144	49.44	0.85	28.73
		1932	1,016	49.78	0.97	30.83
	W.I.	1928	208	25.00	0.34	4.90
		1932	92	25.44	0.46	4.40
Number of lessons actually sent to enrollees by the schools	I.C.S.	1928	1,144	18.81	0.48	16.09
		1932	1,016	20.90	0.57	18.08
	W.I.	1928	208	13.27	0.60	8.65
		1932	92	12.83	0.93	8.83
Number of lessons returned to the schools for correction by the instructors	I.C.S.	1928	1,144	11.09	0.38	13.01
		1932	1,016	12.85	0.51	16.39
	W.I.	1928	208	10.43	0.53	7.65
		1932	92	10.76	0.81	7.69

## LENGTH OF COURSES OF STUDY

It is evident in Table XVII that enrollees usually intend to study for rather long periods of time. The mean number of lessons in the courses selected by the International Correspondence Schools enrollees is in excess of forty-nine, and the mean for the Women's Institute enrollees is about twenty-five. As each lesson is designed to require about seventeen hours of work, we can estimate that on the average the men expected to study for about two years and the women for about one year. It will be noted that the International Correspondence Schools endeavored to keep their students well supplied with lessons, with a mean number sent to enrollees exceeding by eight the mean of the number completed and returned for correction; the Women's Institute was much more conservative in sending out lessons, the mean of lessons sent out exceeding the number returned for correction by only two lessons. Of those who actually studied courses, the International

Correspondence Schools enrollees returned a mean of about twelve lessons, and the Women's Institute enrollees returned about eleven.

TABLE XVIII

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932, ARRANGED BY THE NUMBER OF LESSONS INCLUDED IN THE COURSES THEY CHOSE FOR STUDY

Number of Lessons	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Less than 10	I.C.S.	1928 .....	12	21.67	7.52	24.94
		1932 .....	9	30.56	11.32	32.01
10 to 19	I.C.S.	1928 .....	128	24.92	2.39	26.91
		1932 .....	144	24.65	2.33	27.82
20 to 29	I.C.S.	1928 .....	191	24.58	1.96	27.03
		1932 .....	147	35.75	2.79	33.69
30 to 39	I.C.S.	1928 .....	153	23.50	2.20	27.15
		1932 .....	158	26.71	2.11	26.46
40 to 49	I.C.S.	1928 .....	194	17.99	1.54	21.43
		1932 .....	161	26.93	2.20	27.83
50 to 59	I.C.S.	1928 .....	100	18.80	2.55	25.41
		1932 .....	64	27.03	3.91	31.03
60 to 69	I.C.S.	1928 .....	144	17.99	1.68	20.07
		1932 .....	125	20.52	2.03	22.64
70 to 79	I.C.S.	1928 .....	86	22.91	2.83	26.06
		1932 .....	63	21.83	3.09	24.35
80 to 89	I.C.S.	1928 .....	49	21.74	3.76	26.06
		1932 .....	48	22.50	3.90	26.73
90 to 99	I.C.S.	1928 .....	26	15.77	3.28	16.39
		1932 .....	14	12.14	3.84	13.85
100 to 199	I.C.S.	1928 .....	60	16.33	2.52	19.36
		1932 .....	83	22.71	2.78	25.19
200 to 299	I.C.S.	1928 .....	1	...	...	...

The length of course apparently has only a slight relation to the proportion of lessons completed in the course, as shown in Table XVIII. In general, persons who enrolled for courses of



less than forty lessons completed a mean percentage of lessons a few points higher than the mean percentages completed by persons who enrolled for courses of more than ninety lessons. However, one of the best records was made by the group in 1932 which enrolled for courses varying from fifty to sixty lessons in length; this group had a mean percentage of lessons completed of 27.0 with a standard error of 3.9.

TABLE XIX

MEANS AND SIGMAS OF NUMBER OF LESSONS COMPLETED, ARRANGED BY LENGTH OF COURSES OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932

Number of Lessons in Courses	School	Year	Num- ber of Cases	Mean Number of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of Mean	Standard Deviation of Distribution
1 to 9 .....	I.C.S.	1928	22	5.00	...	...
10 to 19 .....	and	and	279	6.11	0.19	3.14
20 to 29 .....	W.I.	1932	626	9.74	0.29	7.28
	com- bined	com- bined				
30 to 39 .....			311	9.86	0.48	8.52
40 to 49 .....			356	10.48	0.53	10.06
50 to 59 .....			163	12.98	1.14	14.45
60 to 69 .....			270	12.96	0.85	13.96
70 to 79 .....			149	17.35	1.59	19.40
80 to 89 .....			98	18.57	2.16	21.30
90 to 99 .....			40	12.50	2.05	12.80
100 to 199 .....			144	26.01	2.88	34.40

Despite the apparent lack of definite relationship between length of course and the enrollees' persistence in study, it should be noted in Table XIX that the mean number of lessons completed in all groups is consistently below twenty. This should be given substantial weight in any consideration of the optimum length of correspondence courses designed to be completed by at least the majority of the people who are enrolled for them. Only about one enrollee in twenty actually completes all the lessons in an International Correspondence Schools course and is granted a diploma.

## LETTERS SENT TO EMPLOYERS OR TEACHERS OF ENROLLEES

Upon request of the enrollee, the International Correspondence Schools will send a report of progress to the enrollee's employer or adviser. Such a report seems to have little effect on prolonging the enrollee's study of the lessons in his course; however, in Table XX it is shown that in 1932 the group for whom no report

TABLE XX

EFFECT OF SENDING REPORTS OF ENROLLEE'S PROGRESS TO A THIRD PARTY AS INDICATED BY THE MEANS AND SIGMAS OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932

Recipients of Progress Reports	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Report sent to en- rollee's employer	I.C.S.	1928 ....	452	22.43	1.15	24.51
		1932 ....	304	24.70	1.58	27.45
No report sent	I.C.S.	1928 ....	692	20.22	0.94	24.75
		1932 ....	695	25.84	1.05	27.60
Report sent to high school principal or adviser	I.C.S.	1932 ....	17	57.35	9.34	37.34

was sent to employers had a slightly higher mean percentage of lessons completed (mean  $25.8 \pm 1.1$ ) than the group for whom such a progress report was sent (mean  $24.7 \pm 1.6$ ). There was indication in the interviews that some men might enroll for courses and ask that their employers be notified of such enrollment in order to help in securing advancements; when the advancements were secured, the courses had served their purpose, so far as the enrollees were concerned, so study was often discontinued immediately.

In the case of enrollees who requested that reports be sent to some school official or teacher in 1932, there is the strikingly high mean percentage of lessons completed of  $57.4 \pm 9.3$ . The group was made up to a large extent of people who received

Fortieth Anniversary Scholarships and pupils making use of the supervised correspondence study methods in high schools. This appears to add evidence to the conclusion that even slight supervision has value in encouraging enrollee persistence in correspondence study.

#### COURSE OF STUDY CHANGES BY ENROLLEES

Two hundred and twenty-five enrollees, or 20 per cent of the people who enrolled for courses in the International Correspondence Schools in 1928, changed their courses during the eight-year period between the time of enrollment and March, 1936, according to the data in Table XXI. Of this number, 30 per cent made the change within the first six months after they first signed for courses, and 80 per cent of the group had made the change within the first two years. Proportionately less than half as many changed their courses of study in the group that enrolled in 1932; that is, only ninety-three cases, or 9 per cent. Only four, or about 1 per cent, of the enrollees in the Women's Institute changed courses during the period with which this study deals.

TABLE XXI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS, IN A SELECTED SAMPLING THAT ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932, WHO CHANGED COURSES, ARRANGED BY PERIODS OF TIME ELAPSING BETWEEN ORIGINAL ENROLLMENT AND CHANGE OF COURSE

School and Year	Number of Months from Enrollment to Change of Course											
	First 6 Mos.		6-12 Mos.		1-2 Yrs.		2-3 Yrs.		3-4 Yrs.		4 or More Yrs.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I.C.S. 1928.....	66	29	56	25	55	24	25	11	12	5	11	5
I.C.S. 1932.....	43	46	17	18	24	26	6	6	3	3	..	..
W.I. 1928 and 1932 combined	5	100	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

The International Correspondence Schools have a stated policy of allowing changes of course only within a limited time; however, in actual practice this privilege is liberally extended for a

much longer time. Seven (or 3%) of the persons who enrolled in 1928 changed their courses of study not earlier than five years after their original enrollment.

A comparison of Table XXII with Table XVII reveals that when enrollees change their courses of study, they are very likely

TABLE XXII

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE NUMBER OF LESSONS IN NEW COURSES WHEN CHANGES OF COURSES WERE MADE BY MEMBERS OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS IN 1928 AND 1932

Year of Original Enrollment	Number of Cases	Mean Number of Lessons in New Courses	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
1928.....	221	33.73	1.42	21.04
1932.....	89	41.40	2.47	23.19

to be somewhat less ambitious as to the length of course they select than when they first enrolled. The mean number of lessons in the new courses of the 1928 group of enrollees (mean  $33.7 \pm 1.4$ ) is sixteen lessons less than the mean of the number of lessons in the courses originally selected by this group (mean  $49.4 \pm 0.8$ ). The 1932 group shows a somewhat smaller difference, the mean of the lessons in the new courses for this group (mean  $41.4 \pm 2.4$ ) being only eight less than the mean number of lessons in their original course selection (mean  $49.8 \pm 1.0$ ).

When Table XXIII is compared with Table XXIV, it is found that enrollees who change courses complete fewer lessons of their new courses than they did of the courses they selected when they first enrolled. The 1928 International Correspondence Schools enrollees completed a mean percentage of lessons of  $21.1 \pm 0.7$ , whereas those who changed courses completed a mean percentage of  $14.7 \pm 1.4$ . The difference for the 1932 group was somewhat less, being a mean percentage of lessons completed of  $26.2 \pm 1.1$  for their first choice of courses for study and  $21.0 \pm 2.7$  for their second choice. This apparent failure of enrollees to do better

TABLE XXIII

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN NEW COURSES BY THE GROUP THAT CHANGED COURSES WHO WERE MEMBERS OF A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED FOR COURSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS ORIGINALLY IN 1928 AND 1932

Year of Original Enrollment	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
1928.....	225	14.69	1.41	21.11
1932.....	93	21.02	2.69	25.83

on their second chance can be at least partly accounted for in two ways: (1) having had unsuccessful experience with one course, they are likely to stop studying more quickly with the next experience if it does not appear particularly fruitful to them;

TABLE XXIV

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF LESSONS COMPLETED IN COURSES BY A SELECTED SAMPLING OF PERSONS WHO ENROLLED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE IN 1928 AND 1932

General Completion of Courses	School	Year	Number of Cases	Mean Percentage of Lessons Completed	Standard Error of the Mean	Standard Deviation of the Distribution
Complete sampling	I.C.S.	1928 ....	1144	21.09	0.73	24.68
		1932 ....	1016	26.18	1.09	34.67
Complete sampling	W.I.	1928 ....	208	37.40	2.32	33.37
		1932 ....	92	38.15	3.66	34.95

and (2) according to one member of the group that was interviewed, some enrollees change to shorter courses at lower cost in order to avoid paying the full fee of the course for which they first enrolled. Unless more adequate guidance can be given in the selection of the new courses, there appears to be little value in allowing course changes, so far as encouraging enrollees to complete courses is concerned.

EFFECT OF GENERAL ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT  
CONDITIONS

An outcome of this investigation that cannot be properly classified as a characteristic of either the enrollees or the schools is shown in Table XXIV. The International Correspondence Schools enrollees in 1932 completed a mean percentage of lessons significantly larger than the 1928 group—the standard error of the difference of the means being scarcely one-fourth the size of the actual difference. One of two things is manifest in this difference: (1) that the period of economic depression, with its concomitant of difficulty in securing satisfactory employment, brought about a more persistent effort on the part of the enrollees, or (2) that the depression was a selective factor, eliminating some of the persons who would have been poorer students.

The difference between the means of the Women's Institute enrollees for 1928 and 1932 is negligible. This failure to conform to the variation in record of the I.C.S. enrollees may be explained by the tremendous loss in enrollment of this institution (the 1932 enrollment was only 22% of the 1928 enrollment), and by the fact that much of this loss was made up of the married women who were the better students, as was pointed out in Chapter III, Table IV. Consideration of the record of the unmarried enrollees in the Women's Institute for the two years shows an improvement in relative completion of courses in 1932 over 1928 that approaches the gain of the men.

## SUMMARY

Selected characteristics of the administration and instruction of the courses offered by the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute have been considered in this chapter to find out what effect, if any, they have on the enrollees. It is shown that there is a definite tendency for enrollees to pay a portion of the fee only slightly in excess of the proportion of the course they have completed, in spite of the fact that the contract calls for payment of the entire fee. Persons who pay cash for their courses complete a much larger portion of their courses

than persons who pay on the installment plan. The International Correspondence Schools do not give any definite personal, first-hand supervision or encouragement to enrollees, but this study shows that persons who are more or less supervised by public school administrators or teachers are more likely to be persistent in their work than others.

Marks indicate that persons from any except the lowest ability levels usually submit work of acceptable quality, which shows that most of the courses of study are evidently within the comprehension of any person of normal intelligence. Although courses now range in length from two to over two hundred lessons, there is slight relationship between length of course and persistence in study. The schools have a liberal policy of allowing changes of courses, but such changes do not increase the relative persistency of study by the enrollees. Finally, one of the most significant factors associated with relative completion of correspondence courses appears to be general economic and employment conditions.

## CHAPTER V

### SATISFACTIONS OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDY AS EXPRESSED IN INTERVIEW AND QUESTION- NAIRE REPLIES OF ENROLLEES

THIS chapter is concerned with analyses of data obtained from interview and questionnaire replies, with the objective of revealing (1) enrollees' stated reasons for studying by correspondence methods; (2) enrollees' stated reasons for selecting the specific courses chosen by them; (3) enrollees' opinions concerning correspondence school courses, lessons, instructors, and local representatives; (4) enrollees' stated reasons for failing to complete courses; (5) enrollees' stated reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with correspondence courses; and (6) number of hours per week enrollees claim to have devoted to studying correspondence courses.

#### REASONS FOR ENROLLING IN THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

Factors involving time and money make these two the basic reasons given for enrolling in correspondence courses rather than attending schools offering classroom instruction. There is some disagreement between the interview and questionnaire groups as to the relative importance of these two reasons, but each group put the two among the four most important reasons for enrolling. Considering only the reason that individual enrollees indicated as the most important one, the four principal causes have been selected and are shown in Table XXV.

Why should there be this wide divergence between the two groups of replies as to the main cause of the enrollment for a correspondence course? More than a third of the group who were interviewed signed up for a course because they could study at their own convenience; whereas only about one in ten of this



TABLE XXV

FOUR PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR ENROLLING FOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSES RATHER THAN FOR CLASSROOM COURSES AS INDICATED BY INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES  
(PERCENTAGES BASED ON COMPLETE SAMPLING)

Interview	Per Cent	Order of Importance	Per Cent	Questionnaire
Time	21.9	1	2.4	Money
Place	9.2	2	0.8	Courses not available near by
Influence of others	8.4	3	0.5	Time
Money	6.7	4	0.3	Prefer to study alone
	16.8	All others	1.1	
	37.0	No response	94.9	
	<u>100.0</u>		<u>100.0</u>	

group enrolled for financial reasons. On the other hand, nearly half of the questionnaire replies gave some reason related to money, usually lack of finances to continue education in college or high school or the necessity of leaving school to go to work, as the primary cause for taking a correspondence course, and only about one in ten gave the matter of study time as their chief reason. The answer is very likely included in one or all of the following conditions: (1) The interviews were made in New Jersey, a thickly populated state with unusual educational opportunities, offering good day and evening classes and college courses to be had at little, if any, greater cost than correspondence courses. Since the questionnaire responses came from all sections of the United States and its possessions, it can be assumed that many enrollees would come from places where educational opportunities such as New Jersey offers are not readily available and the cost of correspondence courses would be considerably less than the tuition and travel expense involved in studying at a distant institution. (2) The method of securing information may have had some effect on the reply: it may be easier to write to some distant unknown person that one did not have the money to go to college than it is to say so in a face-to-face interview. (3) Per-

haps the two causes are really very closely tied together, and what may have been a "money" cause to one person might have been a "time" cause to another.

The most significant facts to be noted here are that the basic reasons for studying correspondence courses, according to enrollees' beliefs, are: (1) Opportunity to arrange hours of study to suit the convenience of the student. (2) Opportunity to secure an education at less cost than attending college or other schools—the saving often resulting from the student "earning while learning." (3) Opportunity to study subjects not offered in the local institutions. (4) Opportunity to study at home. (5) Opportunity to study alone. (6) Influence of arguments of representatives of the correspondence school, of friends, of employers, of business associates or of others.

All these reasons, except (6), indicate quite clearly that correspondence schools potentially serve an important portion of education, so far largely untouched by other institutions. It is extremely doubtful that the students of any other educational institution, dealing with people eighteen years of age or older, have better reasons for studying in the particular school in which they enroll.

The above report on reasons for taking correspondence courses is based on only the primary reason stated in the replies. Each enrollee was asked to list, in order of importance, the three main reasons for enrolling. The variety of replies, when all three degrees of importance are considered, is noteworthy, as Table XXVI reveals. The column headed "Weighted Importance of Reason" is made up of the totals secured by multiplying each first choice by three, each second choice by two, and each third choice by one, and combining the interview and questionnaire responses to this question. It will be noted that the order of importance remains practically the same as when only the most important cause is considered.

In addition to the reasons given in Table XXVI, the following appear one or more times in the interview responses: "Liked a previous course I had studied," "Answered an advertisement in a magazine," and "Believed the course would be valuable." Other

TABLE XXVI

REASONS FOR SELECTING CORRESPONDENCE STUDY RATHER THAN CLASSROOM COURSES:  
DATA ARRANGED BY INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES AND BY ORDER OF IM-  
PORTANCE AS INDICATED BY THE ENROLLEES

Reasons for Taking Correspondence Courses	Weighted Importance of Reason*	Order of Importance					
		First		Second		Third	
		Int.	Quest.	Int.	Quest.	Int.	Quest.
1. Monetary reasons.....	238						
A. Couldn't afford to go to college.....		3	26	1	7	1	1
B. Couldn't afford to attend school (other than college).....		3	19	..	1	2	1
C. Had to go to work at early age.....		2	5	1	2	..	..
D. Had family to support..		..	2	..	5	..	3
E. Correspondence courses are cheaper than other available courses.....		..	3	..	3	..	1
2. Reasons related to time....	161						
A. To study during leisure time.....		22	8	5	12	1	1
B. Working hours too irregular for classes.....		2	2	..	3	..	3
C. Correspondence courses can be finished in shorter time.....		..	1	..	2	..	1
D. Other.....		1	1	..	..	..	..
3. Courses not available near by.....	87	4	18	1	8	..	3
4. Influenced by others.....	64						
A. Representatives of I.C.S.		3	..	4	2	..	1
B. Employers.....		..	1	2	..	..	..
C. Friends or relatives.....		3	..	1	1	..	..
D. Others.....		4	2	..	1	1	1
5. Did not want to attend classes.....	48						
A. Felt themselves to be too old.....		1	3	..	2	..	1
B. Preferred to study alone.		1	2	1	..	..	1
C. Classes too inconvenient		..	2	1	2	..	2
D. Rebelled at regular school routine.....		..	1	..	..	..	..
E. Other.....		..	..	1	..	..	..
6. Preferred to study at home.	42	11	2	1	..	..	1

TABLE XXVI—Continued

Reasons for Taking Correspondence Courses	Weighted Importance of Reason*	Order of Importance					
		First		Second		Third	
		Int.	Quest.	Int.	Quest.	Int.	Quest.
7. Could not attend classes because of.....	33	.	.	.	.	.	.
A. Physical incapacity....		I	..	I	I	..	..
B. "Too busy".....		4	I	I	2	..	2
C. Other.....		I	..	..	..	..	..
8. Wanted to study only the phases of the course in which interested.....	12	..	2	..	2	..	2
9. Received a free scholarship.	8	I	I	..	I	..	..
10. Enjoyed correspondence method of study.....	7	..	I	I	I	..	..
11. Used course to supplement regular school work.....	6	..	2	..	..	..	..
12. Wanted books for own reference library.....	6	I	I	..	..	..	..
13. Felt that correspondence courses gave more individual instruction.....	5	..	..	..	2	..	I
14. "Youthful enthusiasm and lack of parental advice"....	5	..	I	..	I	..	..
15. Other reasons.....	27	I	5	3	I	..	I
16. Reasons connected with selection of subject rather than method of study.....	50	5	5	I	6	..	6

\* See page 52 for explanation of method of securing these figures.

reasons given in the questionnaire replies were "Glowing terms of an advertisement," "Course was paid for by employers," "Course was required by employers," "The course is one of the best available anywhere," "I like the conciseness of the course," and "No alternative."

Practically all of the above statements by enrollees in the two groups are certainly valid reasons for studying correspondence courses.

## REASONS FOR SELECTING COURSES

*Why Do Enrollees Select the Courses for Which They Enroll?*

People select certain courses offered by the correspondence school for four main reasons, according to the replies from the interviews and the questionnaires in this study: (1) to learn a new occupation; (2) to learn more about the occupation in which they are already engaged; (3) to accomplish a definitely vocational purpose, either for improvement in a present job or for transfer to a new position; and (4) for academic or avocational reasons.

In analyzing this part of the study, the questionnaire and interview replies were considered as one group because observation revealed no significant differences between the two source groups within each of the four purpose categories. There was some slight variation between the two source groups as to purpose for enrolling for correspondence courses, as indicated in Table XXVII,

TABLE XXVII

PURPOSES FOR STUDYING CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AS INDICATED IN INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES OF A GROUP OF ENROLLEES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Reason for Selecting Course	Questionnaire Replies		Interview Replies	
	No.	%	No.	%
I. To improve in present occupation.....	45	39.1	33	44.6
II. To prepare to enter a different occupation...	42	36.4	24	32.4
III. Vocational, but intent not clearly stated....	13	11.3	5	6.8
IV. Cultural or avocational.....	15	13.0	12	16.2

but the variation was very likely due to the more exact nature of the interview replies, for if the number included in the non-definite Group III of the questionnaire responses is reduced to the same percentage size as the similar group of the interview responses and the balance is added to Group I, the differences between the two groups would be practically eliminated.

Additional comments, not strictly within the limits of the listed categories, were made in twenty-three of the questionnaire replies

and five of the interviews. These comments were largely in the nature of clearer descriptions of the listed reasons; some are worthy of note. The following appear in somewhat the same wording at least twice among the "Other reasons" for choosing the particular course for which the person enrolled: "Mental stimulation," "Anxious to earn more money," "To specialize—which high school makes no provision for in my case," and "Not necessarily to prepare for but to be able to enter a different occupation, as my present one is of hazardous nature."

*Does the Purpose Influence the Persistency of Study?*

Examination of Table XXVIII reveals a slight apparent tendency for people who state that they are studying courses for avocational or cultural reasons (that is, "as a hobby," "to complete school requirements," "to make good use of spare time") to complete a larger portion of their courses than people who study for vocational reasons. Likewise there seems to be a slight tendency for people with the objective of transferring to a new occupation to study more persistently than those who are seeking only to improve in their present work. In no case does the difference of the means exceed the sigma of the difference of the means; the tendencies therefore are of no statistical significance.

The percentages of completion according to different purposes do not bear out one of the conclusions made by Smith in his study of enrollees in the Home Study Department of Columbia University. Smith reports a very definite indication

. . . that one who seeks to better qualify himself in the vocation in which he is engaged is more persistent in his Home Study work. . . . In case of those who seek some training to fit them for supplementary or different vocational pursuits, it is very likely that they find their original hopes modified by the discouragements of broadening knowledge of their new interests.<sup>1</sup>

The part of the study of International Correspondence Schools enrollees that is comparable with the foregoing portion of Smith's investigation reveals that the largest percentage of completions (17%) was composed of enrollees who were hoping to change to

<sup>1</sup> G. B. Smith, *Home Study in Adult Education*, p. 39. 1935.

TABLE XXVIII  
EFFECT OF PURPOSE FOR ENROLLING UPON RELATIVE COMPLETION OF COURSES AS INDICATED  
BY QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW REPLIES COMBINED

Reason for Selecting Course	Num- ber of Cases	Per Cent of Course Completed											
		0	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100%
I. To improve in present occupation .....	77	5 (6%)	11	13	9	7	11	6	2	2	2	1	8 (10%)
			Sigma <sub>I</sub> = 32.3			Mean <sub>I</sub> = 36.5			Median <sub>I</sub> = 30.8				
II. To prepare to enter a dif- ferent occupation ....	64	8 (13%)	6	8	6	6	6	5	4	2	2	..	11 (17%)
			Sigma <sub>II</sub> = 32.2			Mean <sub>II</sub> = 41.9			Median <sub>II</sub> = 36.8				
III. Vocational, but intent not definite .....	17	3 (18%)	4	2	2	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	4 (24%)
			Sigma <sub>III</sub> = 36.9			Mean <sub>III</sub> = 34.0			Median <sub>III</sub> = 17.6				
IV. Cultural or avocational	25	4 (16%)	3	3	3	1	..	2	2	1	..	2	4 (16%)
			Sigma <sub>IV</sub> = 36.1			Mean <sub>IV</sub> = 44.3			Median <sub>IV</sub> = 28.4				

a new occupation, and the lowest percentage of completions (10%) was composed of the persons who were enrolled to improve themselves in their present occupations.

*Does the Purpose Influence the Satisfaction with the Course?*

Table XXIX shows that about one person in three was disappointed with his course, in terms of his stated objective for enrolling. The group that studied with the hope of changing to a new occupation showed the largest percentage of disappointment, according to the first part of Table XXIX; this is most interesting when it is recalled that in Table XXVIII it was indicated that this same group was somewhat more persistent in studying than the other groups. The second section of Table XXIX bears out the evidence of the foregoing statement, for here we find that the group who studied with the hope of changing occupations is the only group that falls below 50 per cent in the number who believe that their investment in the correspondence course was worth while. We also find in the second section of Table XXIX that about one enrollee out of every three feels that he made a mistake in investing in a correspondence course. This proportion of enrollees who were disappointed with their courses does not seem abnormally large when we read in Pope's study of the elimination of women students from colleges that 48 per cent of the entering freshmen in six colleges in 1925 withdrew before graduation.<sup>2</sup> A study by Moon showed that nearly 60 per cent of the entering freshmen left the University of Chicago before earning a degree;<sup>3</sup> this percentage may be taken as an indirect indication of the proportion of enrollees in women's colleges who, for any of a wide variety of reasons, believe they made a mistake in enrolling in college. The comparable percentages given above become even more striking in view of the care that reputedly is used in the selection of college entrants as contrasted with the advertising inducements and ready acceptance of nearly all applicants by the correspondence school.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. Pope, *Factors Affecting the Elimination of Women Students*, p. 15. 1931.

<sup>3</sup> George R. Moon, "The Student Who Drops Out of College," *School and Society*, Vol. 27, p. 576, May 12, 1928.



TABLE XXIX  
EFFECT OF PURPOSE FOR ENROLLING UPON SATISFACTION WITH COURSE AS INDICATED BY  
INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES COMBINED

Reason for Selecting Course	No. of Cases	Question: Are you satisfied that you gained the purpose for which you enrolled in the correspondence course?				No. of Cases	Question: Are you satisfied that your investment in the correspondence course was (or will be) worth while?							
		Gained more than expected from course		Course exactly as expected			Disappointed with course		Yes		No			
		No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
I. To improve in present occupation .....	78	27	34.6	26	33.3	25	32.1	79	51	64.6	24	30.3	4	5.1
II. To prepare to enter a different occupation .....	66	18	27.3	19	28.8	29	43.9	65	28	43.1	28	43.1	9	13.8
III. Vocational, but intent not clearly stated .....	18	8	44.4	6	33.3	4	22.2	18	10	55.5	6	33.3	2	11.1
IV. Cultural or avocational ...	27	7	25.9	11	40.7	9	33.3	27	14	51.9	10	37.0	3	11.1
Totals .....	189	60	31.7	62	23.8	67	35.4	189	103	54.5	68	36.0	18	9.5

*Does the Correspondence School Enrollee Gain the Purpose for Which He Enrolls?*

A comparison of objectives for enrolling in correspondence courses and results obtained can be drawn from Table XXX. Sixty per cent of the people who enrolled with the ambition to improve in the occupation in which they were at work felt that the course actually did help them to do their own jobs better. Those who enrolled hoping to change to new occupations found their hopes realized in only 14 per cent of the cases. More than 75 per cent of the group who enrolled for cultural or avocational reasons found the courses to be valuable aside from any help with their work, but this group had such vague objectives that it is difficult to estimate the true value of their replies.

That the objectives attained were not always those expressed as the purposes for enrolling is indicated in Table XXX. It will be noted, for example, that although the main objective of Group II was to change to a new occupation, more than twice as many of this group credited the correspondence courses as helping them with the occupation in which they were engaged as believed that the courses helped them to achieve their objective of a new job.

Consideration must constantly be given in this study to the fact that it is concerned with people who enrolled for correspondence courses just preceding and shortly after the start of a period of great financial and industrial depression. During the economic and occupational uncertainty of such a time it would be particularly difficult to state exactly how much vocational help should be expected from even the best efforts of correspondence school enrollees. It must also be kept in mind that only 16 per cent of this group completed all the lessons in the courses for which they enrolled and that less than 25 per cent completed as much as two-thirds of the lessons. In spite of the low percentage of completions, the data in Table XXX reveal that nearly half the enrollees who replied to the interviews or to the questionnaires indicated that their correspondence study had helped them with the occupation at which they were working; that 23 per cent believed that their study had helped them to get a better salary or to avoid a salary cut; and that 21 per cent were certain that

TABLE XXX

ENROLLEES' STATED BELIEFS AS TO SOME OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THEIR STUDY OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSES ARRANGED TO SHOW RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PURPOSE FOR ENROLLING AND RESULTS OBTAINED

Reason for Selecting Course	Number of Cases	Course Helped to Do Own Job Better		Course Helped to Secure a Better Job		Course Helped to Get Better Salary or Avoid a Salary Cut		Found Course to Be Valuable Aside from Any Help with Work	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I. To improve in present occupation .....	77	51	66.2	22	28.6	24	31.2	62	80.5
II. To prepare to enter a different occupation	64	20	31.3	9	14.1	9	14.1	41	64.1
III. Vocational, but in- tent not definitely stated .....	17	13	76.5	5	29.4	4	23.5	14	82.4
IV. Cultural or avoca- tional .....	25	7	28.0	3	12.0	5	20.0	19	76.0
Totals									
Groups I, II, and III .	158	84	53.2	36	22.8	37	23.4	117	74.1
All Groups .....	183	91	49.7	39	21.3	42	23.0	136	74.3

their correspondence school study had helped them to secure a better job.

The foregoing percentages show undeniable evidence that the enrollees consider that there is at least some vocational success as a result of correspondence study. These figures gain increased significance when compared with the following statements of predicted success of college students in their chosen vocation, as given in a study by Sparling:

In view of the discrepancy between supply and apparent demand it may be concluded that a large number of students in Long Island University, perhaps three-fourths, will be unable to realize their present ambitions.

The majority of the students expect to enter a vocation in which they have an intelligence handicap.

Serious discrepancies exist between the types of work the student likes to do and the types required by the chosen vocation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Edward J. Sparling, *Do College Students Choose Vocations Wisely?* pp. 18, 95, 96. 1933.

Nearly 75 per cent of the interview and questionnaire replies indicated that the enrollees found the correspondence lessons to be of value to them aside from any help the instruction may or may not have given them with their work. These constitute some of the most favorable replies in the entire study. The figures are shown in Table XXX, last section.

#### REASONS FOR NOT COMPLETING CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The data from the files of the International Correspondence Schools revealed that only about one out of twenty enrollees actually completes a course. The interview group closely approximates the general group on this item, as four out of seventy-five (or 5.3%) completed courses; the questionnaire replies showed nearly twice as many completions in proportion to the group (10.4%). With such a small proportion completing courses, the question of what happens to the remaining nineteen out of each group of twenty enrollees arises.

Of the seventy-one interviewed enrollees who did not complete courses, 73 per cent gave reasons indicating no dissatisfaction with their contacts with the International Correspondence Schools and its representatives (Table XXXI). This is most significant, for if only one out of four of the drop-outs is due to dissatisfaction, failure to complete a course is in itself no accurate criterion of enrollee dissatisfaction. The number of dissatisfied enrollees is believed to be quite accurately indicated by this response from the group who were interviewed, as each enrollee was encouraged to state any dissatisfaction that he had felt in his contact with the correspondence school. It should be noted (Table XXXI) that the per cent of dissatisfied correspondence school drop-outs is not much greater than the per cent of dissatisfied college drop-outs and compares rather favorably with the number who "lost interest" and dropped out of adult education courses in Cleveland. This last comparison becomes more striking when the percentage of correspondence school enrollees who "neglected to study" is added to the group who were dissatisfied. The total percentage (45%) exactly equals the percentage of adult education drop-outs who "lost interest."

TABLE XXXI

PERCENTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ENROLLEES WHO DID NOT COMPLETE COURSES FOR CERTAIN STATED REASONS COMPARED WITH PERCENTAGES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS AND OF AN ADULT EDUCATION GROUP WHO GAVE SIMILAR STATED REASONS FOR FAILING TO COMPLETE COURSES

Stated Reason for Not Completing Course	Per Cent of Non-Finishing Groups					
	I.C. Schools		Group of 6 Women's Colleges 1925 <sup>1</sup>	Franklin College 1920- 1921 <sup>2</sup>	Indiana State Teachers College 1913-1923 <sup>3</sup>	Cleveland Adult Education Classes <sup>4</sup>
	Inter- views 1932	Question- naires 1928 and 1932				
1. a. Dissatisfaction with some phase of school situation .....	27	21	20	5	12	..
b. Lost interest .....	..	..	..	..	..	45
c. Neglect of study ....	18	12	..	..	..	..
2. Financial .....	14	12	31	42	28	25
3. Change of plans .....	25	9	..	..	21	5
4. Ill health or injury .....	6	3	7	7	..	11
5. Marriage .....	3	1	7	3	25	..
6. Academic failure .....	(8) <sup>5</sup>	..	11	..	..	13

<sup>1</sup> Pope, R. V., *Factors Affecting the Elimination of Women Students from College*, p. 43. 1931.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Cleveland Board of Education, Director of Adult Education, "The Education of Adults," *Seventy-ninth Annual Report, 1929-1930*, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> Reason inferred from available data.

A change of plans or change of work was the cause stated by 25 per cent of the correspondence school drop-outs who were interviewed. Eighteen per cent admitted that they failed to complete courses simply because they neglected to study. Financial troubles caused another large group, 14 per cent, to give up their studies, and ill health was the reason advanced by 6 per cent of the non-completing group.

Although nearly four years had elapsed between the time of enrollment and the time of the interviews, 3 per cent of the group who had not completed courses claimed that they were still studying. It may be noted that there are nearly as many (4%) who claim to have secured the information they wanted without com-

TABLE XXXII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF REASONS FOR FAILING TO COMPLETE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES, AS GIVEN IN QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW REPLIES

Stated Reasons for Non-Completion of Courses	Total		Interview		Questionnaire	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Dissatisfied	39	23	19	27	20	21
a. Selected wrong course	(10)		(6)		(4)	
b. Course was repetition of regular school work	(2)		(1)		(1)	
c. Course seemed to be of no real value	(2)		(1)		(1)	
d. Course was too simple	(2)		..		(2)	
e. Course was too general	(3)		(2)		(1)	
f. Couldn't understand the lessons	(2)		(1)		(1)	
g. Course was not applicable to enrollee's occupation	(2)		..		(2)	
h. Enrollee found himself unable to enter the occupation for which the course prepared	(5)		(2)		(3)	
i. Too little practical work—too much reading	(1)		(1)		..	
j. Practical experience forged ahead of lessons	(1)		..		(1)	
k. Needed stimulation of firsthand contact with instructor	(2)		(1)		(1)	
l. Extra supplies cost too much (chemicals)	(3)		(2)		(1)	
m. Course was misrepresented	(3)		(1)		(2)	
n. Became disgusted with local representative of the correspondence school	(1)		(1)		..	
2. Changed plans	27	16	18	25	9	9
a. New job interfered with study	(18)		(13)		(5)	
b. Changed plans for work and study	(4)		(2)		(2)	
c. Went to college or business school	(5)		(3)		(2)	
3. Financial difficulty	21	13	10	14	11	12
a. "Couldn't afford the money"	(6)		(2)		(4)	
b. Unemployed	(12)		(6)		(6)	
c. Cut in salary	(3)		(2)		(1)	
4. Ill health	7	4	4	6	3	3
a. Illness of enrollee or family	(5)		(4)		(1)	
b. Seriously injured in accident	(1)		..		(1)	
c. Eyesight too poor to study	(1)		..		(1)	
5. Neglected to study	24	14	13	18	11	12
a. Too tired after work to study	(7)		(6)		(1)	
b. Got married	(3)		(2)		(1)	
c. Lack of time	(5)		(1)		(4)	
d. Enrollee found he wasn't interested	(2)		(2)		..	

TABLE XXXII—Continued

Stated Reasons for Non-Completion of Courses	Total		Interview		Questionnaire	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
e. Other interests interfered	e.	(1)	..		(1)	
f. "Too many other things to do"	f.	(1)	(1)		..	
g. "I was too young"	g.	(1)	..		(1)	
h. "Companions kidded me about studying a correspondence course"	h.	(1)	(1)		..	
i. Neglected to study	i.	(3)	..		(3)	
6. Claimed to have completed course (but claim not borne out by records of school)		8	5	1	1	7
7. Secured information desired		8	5	3	4	5
a. Wanted only certain parts of course	a.	(4)		(1)		(3)
b. Preferred just to read the course	b.	(4)		(2)		(2)
8. Still studying		22	13	2	3	20
9. Claimed final examination lost in mail		1	1	..	..	1
10. Indicated they had completed at least one correspondence course (although not the one with which this study is particularly concerned)		10	6	1	1	9
Total		167	100	71	99	96
Completed all lessons and were sent a diploma by the correspondence school		25	..	4	..	21

pleting the course as there are in the group that actually completed the course. Stated reasons for non-completion of the courses are given in Table XXXII.

The percentages for the questionnaire group closely approximate those given by the group who were interviewed, except on the stated reasons "change of plans" and "still studying." There seems to be no explanation for this variance other than some factor in the nature of the group who were willing to fill in and return the questionnaire blanks.

Although the percentage of correspondence school drop-outs is somewhat higher than the college and adult education class drop-outs, we find that the reasons that correspondence school

enrollees state for failing to complete courses are quite comparable with the reasons stated by the college and adult class students, as shown in Table XXXI. The correspondence group show a much larger percentage of drop-outs because of "change of plans" and a much smaller percentage due to "financial difficulties." Possibly lurking in these two divergencies is a real value for correspondence instruction; that is, the possibility of changing educational or vocational plans at lower cost than is possible in classroom schools.

Both the colleges and the adult classes list "academic failure" as a cause of non-completion of courses. Only two of the correspondence school enrollees who were interviewed admitted that the lessons were too difficult for them, but four others had received marks indicating that the last paper they submitted had not been acceptable to the correspondence instructor. In Table XXXI the percentage of correspondence school drop-outs due to academic failure is enclosed in parentheses to indicate that the figure is based, not on stated reasons, but upon inference from the data available in the instructional records of the International Correspondence Schools.

ENROLLEES' REPLIES TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AND LESSONS

*How Do Correspondence Courses Compare with Classroom Courses?*

One rather unexpected result of both the interview and the questionnaire replies was the answer to the question, "As compared with courses you have had with classroom teachers, did you find the correspondence courses to be harder?" According to Table XXXIII, less than 30 per cent of the replies of both groups indicated that the enrollees found the correspondence courses to be more difficult than classroom courses.

On the question of the relative interest of classroom and correspondence courses, however, there was a difference of opinion expressed in the interview and questionnaire replies. Over half, or 51.4 per cent, of the enrollees who were interviewed stated that they had found classroom courses to be the more interesting



TABLE XXXIII

COMPARATIVE DIFFICULTY OF CORRESPONDENCE AND CLASSROOM COURSES AS INDICATED  
BY INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES

Nature of Response	Number of Interview Replies	Percentage of Interview Replies	Number of Questionnaire Replies	Percentage of Questionnaire Replies
Correspondence courses were very much easier .....	0	13.2	17	34.2
Correspondence courses were some- what easier .....	9		22	
Correspondence and classroom courses were about the same in difficulty .....	39	57.4	42	36.8
Correspondence courses were some- what harder .....	14	29.4	26	29.0
Correspondence courses were very much harder .....	6		7	
Totals .....	68		114	

of the two, whereas the questionnaire replies showed 42 per cent as finding the greater interest in correspondence courses and 37 per cent favoring classroom courses. These figures are given in Table XXXIV.

If 70 per cent of the persons interviewed or replying to questionnaires found the courses no more difficult than courses offered in classrooms, it appears that the International Correspondence Schools have been reasonably successful in their efforts to write the courses within the comprehension of most of the persons enrolled. It is doubtful if the interest value can be improved very much in an instructional situation where, innately, the teacher is remote from the learner. When there is some personal supervision interest appears to be heightened.

Several of the free responses at the end of the questionnaire also brought out the factor of interest in correspondence study. Two replies will serve to show the nature of the viewpoints expressed on this point. An assistant postmaster in a small south-

TABLE XXXIV

COMPARATIVE INTEREST OF CORRESPONDENCE AND CLASSROOM COURSES AS INDICATED  
BY INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES

Nature of Response	Number of Interview Replies	Percentage of Interview Replies	Number of Questionnaire Replies	Percentage of Questionnaire Replies
Correspondence courses were more interesting .....	8	11.5	48	42.1
Correspondence and classroom courses were about the same in interest .....	26	37.1	24	21.1
Classroom courses were more in- teresting .....	36	51.4	42	36.8
Totals .....	70		114	

western town studied a course in good English and states his views quite clearly: "I think most correspondence courses have enough educational material in their construction or compilation to afford an energetic student enough gain worth his amount of expenditure. But I do not think courses are made interesting enough to encourage the student to make the most of his spare moments. If I read an interesting magazine article on some subject personal to me I can remember so much more about it than I can from another article foreign to me. Correspondence courses should be made more interesting." It is quite likely that when the young man speaks of the interest in "familiar" and the lack of interest in "foreign" things he is hitting nearer the truth of the whole matter than he realizes.

Another side of the picture is brought out by a municipal engineer who has received five years of college instruction, and who has also studied several correspondence courses. This enrollee says, "These courses are primarily for those who do things outside of book lids. They state accepted facts and show how to apply these truths to doing things—the real purpose of knowledge. They do not waste time and energy in a futile attempt to show why basic or elemental facts are true. They leave this to the Deity."

*Are Correspondence Lessons Too Difficult, Too Simple, or Too General?*

Only 5.2 per cent of the questionnaire replies showed that, in the enrollees' opinion, the lessons were too difficult to understand, whereas 17.1 per cent of the group interviewed found the lessons to be too hard (Table XXXV). On the other hand, 14.0 per cent of the persons who replied to the questionnaire thought that the lessons were too simple or elementary, whereas only 4.4 per cent of the interviewed group were of that opinion. Real agreement between the questionnaire and interview groups was found when 22.8 per cent of the former and 22.1 per cent of the latter expressed the opinion that the lessons were too general to be of use to them. Of the seventy people who answered the question in the interviews, 67.2 per cent gave the correspondence lessons a favorable response on all three items, while 73.3 per cent of the one hundred sixteen questionnaire replies did likewise. The enrollees who checked more than one of these items did so as follows: six of the interview and two of the questionnaire respondents who checked the lessons as being too general also

TABLE XXXV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONS AS TO THE DIFFICULTY, SIMPLICITY, OR GENERALITY OF THE CORRESPONDENCE LESSONS AND AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE ENROLLEES FELT THEY HAD SELECTED THE WRONG CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Question	Response	Affirmative Replies		Negative Replies	
		No.	%	No.	%
Were the lessons usually too difficult to understand?	Interview . . . . .	12	17.1	58	82.9
	Questionnaire . . . .	6	5.2	109	94.8
Were the lessons too simple or elementary to be interesting?	Interview . . . . .	3	4.4	65	95.6
	Questionnaire . . . .	16	14.0	98	86.0
Were the lessons too general to be of use to you?	Interview . . . . .	15	22.1	53	77.9
	Questionnaire . . . .	26	22.8	88	77.2
Do you feel that you selected the wrong correspondence course?	Interview . . . . .	15	21.1	56	78.9
	Questionnaire . . . .	20	18.3	89	81.7
Totals	Interview . . . . .	45	16.2	232	83.8
	Questionnaire . . . .	68	15.0	384	85.0

checked them as being too difficult; one of the interview and thirteen of the questionnaire respondents who checked the lessons as being too general found them also to be too simple; one man checked all three items.

The total number of enrollees who felt that the lessons were too difficult, or too easy, or too general, counting each enrollee once and eliminating dual replies, was twenty-three (or 30.7%) of the interview group and thirty-one (or 26.7%) of the questionnaire reply group. This indicates that about three out of every ten enrollees will be somewhat dissatisfied with the simplicity, difficulty, or generality of correspondence lessons.

Among the free responses at the end of the questionnaire, the following additional criticisms of the correspondence lessons were found: material in course was out of date, 4; material in course was too narrow and factual, 4; some lessons were not clear, 4; lessons are not adjusted to each pupil's learning ability, 3; lessons cost too much per unit, 3; it is too easy to bluff, 2; none of the fine points of the profession are included, 1.

#### *Do Many Enrollees Select the Wrong Course to Meet Their Needs?*

It is apparently safe to expect that at least one out of every five enrollees will sign up for the wrong correspondence course, according to the last section of Table XXXV. Twenty out of one hundred nine (or 18.3%) of those who answered the questionnaire and fifteen out of seventy-one (or 21.1%) of those who were interviewed stated that they felt they had selected the wrong course.

Proper guidance by the local representatives of the schools could materially reduce this proportion of unsuited enrollees.

Enrollees feel that there has been a change in the policy of the schools, discouraging changes to shorter courses, according to interview replies.

#### HOURS DEVOTED TO CORRESPONDENCE STUDY BY ENROLLEES

In the hope of securing some indication of the amount of time enrollees devote to study of their correspondence courses, the

following question was included in the questionnaire and was asked also of most of the group who were interviewed: "How much time were you able to devote to your correspondence study each week?" The one hundred ten people who answered this question in the questionnaire claimed to have studied from 2 to 35 hours per week; the mean was 11.3 hours per week, the median 10.1, and the mode 10.0. The people who were interviewed did not claim to have studied quite as many hours each week, although the extremes were somewhat extended, the minimum study hours per week being 2 and the maximum, 40; the mean was 9.3 hours per week, the median 8.0, and the mode 7.0.

Table XXXVI attempts to report whether or not the number of hours devoted to study is influenced by the enrollee's satisfac-

TABLE XXXVI

HOURS PER WEEK CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO STUDY OF THEIR COURSES BY ENROLLEES OF THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, ARRANGED BY (1) REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRES AS COMPARED WITH INTERVIEW REPLIES, (2) REPLIES OF ENROLLEES WHO COMPLETED COURSES AS COMPARED WITH THOSE WHO DID NOT FINISH, AND (3) REPLIES OF ENROLLEES INDICATING VARIOUS DEGREES OF SATISFACTION WITH THE COURSES FOR WHICH THEY ENROLLED

	Number of Cases	Gained Much More than Hoped for	Gained Somewhat More than Expected	Course Exactly as Expected	Rather Dis- appointed with Course	Course a Total Loss to Enrollee	Average Hours per Week of Study	Total Average Hours per Week
Questionnaire Replies								
Finished the course . . . . .	40	Hrs. 11.3	Hrs. 12.1	Hrs. 10.5	Hrs. 14.6	Hrs. 12.5	12.0	11.3
Did not finish course . . . . .	70	12.2	11.8	10.0	10.4	11.1	10.8	
Interview Replies								
Finished the course . . . . .	4	....	7.0	5.0	10.5	....	8.2	9.3
Did not finish course . . . . .	60	11.0	8.8	9.8	7.4	10.2	9.3	

tion with the course, and it also endeavors to show whether people who finish courses tend to study more or fewer hours per week than people who do not finish. Apparently the effect of satisfaction with the course is negligible as long as the course is studied, for the mean number of hours devoted to study is between eleven and twelve per week for those who found the course to be a total loss to them as well as for those who were delighted with their courses; this similarity was true of both the questionnaire replies and the interviews. There is a much greater range in the mean number of hours claimed to have been devoted to study by those who finished courses (mean 8.2) and those who did not finish (mean 12.0). At this point one is tempted to assert that the data indicate that the amount of time a student devotes each week to his study has an apparent influence on whether or not he will complete his correspondence course. However, it is doubtful that this rather large difference in hours of study is significant, for the greatest range is between the answers of the people who finished courses as indicated by the questionnaire replies compared with the same group in the interview replies.

It seems quite likely that the average of about ten hours per week claimed by enrollees is higher than the number of hours actually devoted to such study. Probably the reply is influenced by the same sort of defense mechanism that causes the small school boy to tell his teacher that he has studied "till way late at night" on his home work, when actually he has studied only a half hour or so after coming in from play. Although it is interesting to know that enrollees claim to devote about ten hours each week to study of their correspondence courses, and although there is no definite proof to controvert their claims, the interviews left a great doubt in the mind of the investigator as to the validity of the replies to this question and indicated the likelihood of considerable variation in the study time of each enrollee, from no time one week to several hours the following one. The question as asked in this study might have been extended to bring a more comprehensive reply, but it is doubtful if any questions would bring strictly accurate responses regarding the matter of time. It would be nearly impossible to devise any

check, on the matter of study time, that would not influence the enrollees and thereby distort the results; but if some such check could be made it would probably reveal that the average of ten study hours per week, as above recorded, represents not the true average, but rather the amount of time devoted to study by a fairly good student when he is quite interested in his correspondence course.

In spite of the probable lack of validity of the data relative to hours of study per week, it is important to note that Smith, in his study of enrollees of the Columbia University Home Study Department,<sup>5</sup> found that the people in his group expected to study from one to forty-eight hours per week, with a mean of 9.59 hours. The mean of the number of hours per week that the enrollees in the university correspondence school planned to study is within two hours of the mean that enrollees in the private correspondence school claimed to have actually studied each week.

#### CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS

The phase of the study that brought a nearly unanimously favorable response from the enrollees was in regard to the clarity and simplicity of the corrections on the lessons. Sixty out of sixty-three (95%) of the interviewed enrollees and one hundred eight out of one hundred thirteen (95%) of the questionnaire respondents were apparently satisfied with the instructor's criticisms, corrections, and comments on the lessons. Such an unexpectedly high proportion of persons satisfied with the work of the correspondence instructors is a reflection of the painstaking corrections, criticisms, and suggestions that are written by the International Correspondence Schools and Women's Institute instructors on the papers sent in by the enrollees.

Slightly less satisfactory to the enrollees is the amount of advice and help given with the lessons by the instructors; fifty-three out of sixty-five (81%) of the interviewed and eighty-eight out of one hundred nine (81%) of the questionnaire respondents indicated satisfaction on this point. Before this study was actually started, one of the instructors mentioned that some enrollees

<sup>5</sup> George B. Smith, *Home Study in Adult Education*, pp. 34-35. 1935.

were dissatisfied with the amount of extra advice given them. The instructor explained that some students ask technical questions that would involve a whole course to give a satisfactory reply and that others ask questions of a professional nature, extraneous to the course, that would involve large fees if asked of a regular consultant. On the other hand, some enrollees claimed to have had difficulty in understanding the course instructions and asserted that the replies to their queries had been merely mimeographed instruction sheets with extra problems, as unintelligible as the original difficulty, or that they had been advised only briefly and told to keep working at the problem "as given in the book." Undoubtedly there is some truth in both statements that should be given consideration in a complete picture of the situation, but the significant fact remains that in excess of 80 per cent of the enrollees felt satisfied that the correspondence school instructors had given them adequate advice and help with their lessons.

When we turn to the amount of help given by correspondence teachers as compared with that given by classroom teachers, we find, as might be expected, that the bulk of the replies acknowledge that the latter give more help. Exact figures are shown in Table XXXVII.

TABLE XXXVII

THE AMOUNT OF HELP GIVEN BY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THAT GIVEN BY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Responses of Enrollees	Interviews		Questionnaires	
	No.	%	No.	%
Received more help from the classroom teacher .....	43	(64)	60	(56)
Received about the same help from each teacher .....	22	(32)	27	(25)
Received more help from the correspondence teacher .....	2	(3)	20	(19)

Here, as in other parts of the study, the questionnaire responses apparently show a bias favoring the correspondence school as



compared with the interview replies; however, the rather surprising fact remains that over a third of the interviews and nearly half the questionnaire replies expressed themselves as believing that they received at least as much help from the correspondence school instructors as they had received from direct personal contact with classroom instructors.

An indication that the enrollees appreciate the value of personal contact with an instructor is clearly shown in their replies to the question, "What is your feeling about your contact with the instructor?" In reply to this question, forty-eight out of sixty-nine (70%) of those interviewed and seventy-nine out of one hundred fifteen who answered (69%) the questionnaires stated that they "would like to have met with the teacher at least occasionally." Twelve of the persons interviewed (17%) and twelve of the persons who returned questionnaires (10%) went so far as to state that they had "lost interest in the course because (they) couldn't meet with the teacher." Eight (12%) of the group interviewed showed lack of interest in whether they "met with the instructor or not," as did nine (8%) of the group who wrote questionnaire replies. In addition to the above there was also a group of very independent people—one (1%) of those interviewed and fifteen (14%) of the questionnaire respondents who expressed actual pleasure in not having to attend classes or meet with an instructor.

One important point which was brought out by the interviews but did not appear in the questionnaire study was the fact that there is some misconception as to who are the "instructors" of the correspondence school. Over 15 per cent of the enrollees interviewed looked upon the local representative as the instructor of the school, and were critical of the training, intelligence, and instructional ability of the representative for that reason. Here is a point that should be made definitely clear to each enrollee at the outset of his course, and this definition of activity should be further pointed out to the enrollee by the representative himself, if misunderstandings are to be avoided. The facilities available to the enrollees from the headquarters of the schools should be explained.

## LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SCHOOLS

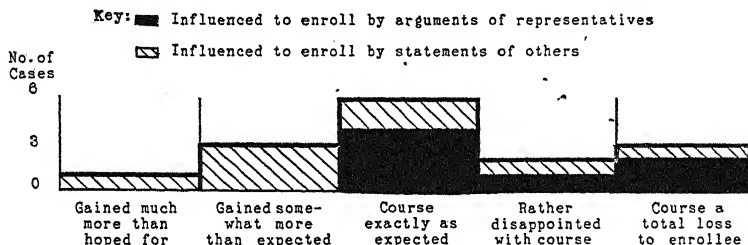
The enrollees, both those who were interviewed and those who responded to the questionnaire, indicated their attitude toward the local representatives of the correspondence school under three headings: (1) as one of the three main reasons for enrolling for a correspondence course instead of studying in a school offering classroom instruction; (2) in answer to two direct "yes" or "no" questions; and (3) under free, undirected "Additional Comments" by the enrollees regarding their like or dislike of correspondence study.

Of the seventy-five people who were interviewed, eight mentioned the representative ("agent," "salesman") of the correspondence school as a primary cause of their enrolling for a correspondence course; of these, only two gave the representative as their sole cause for enrolling. Four of these people felt that the course was just what they "expected it to be," one was "rather disappointed," and three found the course to be "a total loss" to them. This would seem to indicate that there is probably a fifty-fifty chance that the enrollee will be at least somewhat dissatisfied with his course if he is enrolled by any method even approaching "high pressure salesmanship"; Diagram III indicates a further likelihood that at best the enrollee will be only moderately satisfied with the course. It will be noted that all eight of the enrollees in this group felt that the correspondence school representative took plenty of time to help them select the proper course, and that two of the eight felt that he had deliberately misrepresented the course for which they enrolled. Only three of the questionnaire replies mentioned the representative as a main cause of enrollment, and all three indicated dissatisfaction with the courses for which they had been enrolled.

Each person interviewed for this study was asked whether or not in his opinion the correspondence school representative took plenty of time to help the potential enrollee to select the proper course. In answer to this question, fifty-eight of the enrollees who were interviewed gave an unqualified "Yes," and eight an unqualified "No," four enrolled by mail, two selected

DIAGRAM III

RELATIVE SATISFACTIONS OF ENROLLEES WHO GAVE THE SALESMAN'S ARGUMENTS AS A MAIN FORCE IN CAUSING THEM TO ENROLL, COMPARED WITH ENROLLEES WHO WERE INDUCED TO ENROLL BY THE STATEMENTS OF FRIENDS, RELATIVES, EMPLOYERS, OR OTHERS NOT CONNECTED WITH THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS



their own courses, two indicated that no time at all was given to guidance in the selection of their courses, and one indicated that guidance was given in some respects but not in others. This shows that 77 per cent of this group of enrollees who had contact with a representative of the correspondence school felt that the man had done his part in helping them to select the courses best suited to their needs, whereas 11 per cent felt the need for more guidance in the selection of their courses.

In answer to this same question, the questionnaire replies showed that fifty-nine enrollees felt that the representative gave plenty of time, thirty-five felt that he was too hurried in enrolling them, two were uncertain on this point, four stated that they had seen no representative, and thirteen stated that they selected their own courses. This rather large percentage (33%) of enrollees who definitely desired more guidance in the selection of their courses—three times the percentage of the group who were interviewed in New Jersey—raises a very interesting question as to the cause of the difference: perhaps the New Jersey territory representatives of the correspondence school give better guidance service than is generally given throughout the country.

A second direct question requiring a "Yes" or "No" response was worded as follows, "Do you feel that the representative (salesman) of the correspondence school misrepresented the course for which you enrolled?" Of the seventy-five enrollees

interviewed, four had enrolled by mail and so could not answer this question, two had some doubt as to whether or not the course was misrepresented, eighteen answered "Yes," and fifty-one replied "No"; of the seventy-one enrolled by salesmen, then, slightly more than twenty-five per cent definitely felt that the course had been misrepresented in certain respects. The questionnaire replies gave the representatives eighty-nine checks, indicating that the courses had not been misrepresented, as against sixteen who felt that the courses had been misrepresented; three were uncertain on this point; and four had seen no representative. Any charge that the courses have been misrepresented is of serious importance and deserves greater attention than even the very worth-while efforts that have been made by the National Home Study Council, the Federal Trade Commission, and the schools themselves.

In the uncontrolled responses the representatives were mentioned twenty-seven times in the interviews and only nine times in the questionnaire replies; of these, twelve (44%) of the interviews and only two (22%) of the questionnaire statements were favorable to the representatives. The fact that the activities of the representatives did not appear in a larger number of the "free" comments in the questionnaire may be considered in itself a rather clear indication that his activities need not be regarded as the major cause of dissatisfaction with correspondence courses on the part of enrollees.

The two principal complaints against the representatives of the correspondence school were (1) that they promised to secure or help to secure better jobs for the enrollees and then failed to do so, and (2) that the representatives were too interested in their commissions for selling courses. That the schools are alive to the first complaint is very evident in a study of the discussions and activities of the National Home Study Council, and much progress has been made toward correcting the situation. However, little has been done to remedy the second great problem, and probably little will be accomplished until the correspondence schools pay their representatives as educational workers rather than as salesmen; that is, on the basis of the number of students

they are guiding through correspondence courses rather than on the basis of the number and value of the courses they sell.

#### SUMMARY

Questionnaire and interview replies of enrollees were analyzed in this chapter to reveal the stated opinions of enrollees toward selected phases of correspondence instruction and in an attempt to detect whether or not enrollees are satisfied with their contacts with the schools and their representatives. It is shown that in many cases the local representative of the schools is the keyman in the situation and much of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends upon the nature of his efforts. In general, enrollees are satisfied with the instruction they receive and with the courses they study. The stated reasons for studying correspondence courses are valid. The number of drop-outs and the reasons for such failures to complete courses are comparable with the per cent and cause of college drop-outs. There is evidence that there is frequently some vocational advancement as a result of correspondence study. Finally, it is shown that many International Correspondence Schools and Women's Institute enrollees feel that they at least partially attained the objective which they hoped to attain when they enrolled for correspondence courses.

## CHAPTER VI

### GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS study was briefly stated at the outset to be an investigation of random samplings of persons who enrolled for courses in the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute during the years 1928 and 1932, to discover if there are certain general characteristics of the persons enrolled for courses by these schools; to determine whether or not there is any relationship between enrollees' selection of courses and their geographical location, sex, marital status, age, education, occupation, or ability; to ascertain whether or not any relationship exists between enrollees' persistence in studying courses and their geographical location, sex, marital status, education, occupation, or ability; to show what effect selected characteristics of the methods of instruction and administration of the schools have on the relative completion of courses by the enrollees; and to reveal enrollees' stated reasons for studying correspondence courses, their expressed opinions regarding various phases of such study, and their stated reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with correspondence courses.

The fact that this study has been confined to one institution makes evident that its conclusions apply only to the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute and may not be applied directly to other institutions in the correspondence school field. It is not unlikely that the relative age and size of the International Correspondence Schools and the Women's Institute, as compared with other correspondence schools, would have a tendency to make the record of these schools, if anything, better than that of their contemporaries.

The records of approximately twenty-five hundred students who enrolled in 1928 and 1932 have been examined to ascertain

some of the characteristics of the enrollees of a private correspondence school, the nature of the courses they select, and their persistence in studying the courses. As a means of obtaining a qualitative measure of (1) the enrollees and (2) the courses they choose, an ability level scale was devised and applied in an attempt to discover the effect of ability of enrollees upon the selection of courses and persistence of study.

To determine the reasons for enrollment in, and the satisfactions derived from correspondence school study, a questionnaire was prepared and sent to each of the enrollees living in the United States of America and their possessions; replies were received from approximately 9 per cent of those who received the questionnaire. In order to gain a more nearly complete expression of the attitude of the enrollees, interviews were secured from a sampling of persons who enrolled in 1932; approximately 98 per cent of these persons, still living in or near the New Jersey communities where they enrolled, were interviewed.

Study of the data obtained from the above sources is discussed under the following three main topics.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENROLLEES

1. Enrollees for the International Correspondence Schools courses are secured from all sections of the United States of America and their possessions and from several foreign countries.

2. The enrollee population is largely urban, 80 per cent of the enrollment being secured from communities having a population in excess of twenty-five hundred persons.

3. Women who study courses related to homemaking, and particularly married women, seem to be more persistent in their study than are the men studying vocational courses. This is not true, however, when women study courses of similar nature to those selected by the men.

4. The ages having the highest relative completion of courses are approximately fifty, nineteen, and thirty years in the order given. Over 20 per cent of the enrollments were secured from persons who were twenty-one to twenty-four years old—about the age of college seniors. It is quite likely that at this age per-

sons who have been at work for a few years most clearly recognize the need for more knowledge if they are to advance in their field of work.

5. Data regarding educational background of enrollees were too scant to justify any conclusion other than that there seems to be some indication that technical school students are most likely to be persistent in studying International Correspondence Schools courses.\*

6. The largest number of enrollments come from the "Manufacturing and Mechanical" industries, and the smallest number from "mining," the group the International Correspondence Schools was originally organized to serve.

7. Less than 14 per cent of the International Correspondence Schools enrollment, for the two years considered in this study, selected courses that could be positively identified as associated with the occupation in which they were engaged at the time of enrollment.

8. About 43 per cent of the courses were adapted more or less to the individual needs or interests of the enrollees—a surprisingly high proportion of adjustments to the needs of the enrollees, probably exceeded only by the most progressive of the classroom schools.

9. Nearly 25 per cent of the enrollees select courses preparing for occupations on the same ability level as the work in which they are engaged at the time of enrollment.

10. Two general conclusions are drawn from the material presented in Chapter III: (a) that sex and occupation are the only factors that seem to be highly related to the nature of correspondence courses selected for study, although age appears to be at least slightly related; and (b) that none of the characteristics of enrollees considered in this study are of great value in predicting persistence in the study of correspondence courses. Two factors, however, deserve the attention of the correspondence schools as possible aids in determining the likelihood of applicants' success or failure in correspondence study: (a) educational background and (b) extremes in ability level. If the schools would be more hesitant in completing enrollments of



applicants who have meager educational preparation and come from occupations commonly requiring only the lowest levels of ability, at least until there is some evidence of the possibility of such persons completing the courses for which they desire to enroll, it would perhaps relieve the schools of much of the criticism that has been directed at their acceptance of enrollees who are doomed to failure at the outset.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS

1. The cost of International Correspondence Schools courses varies from less than ten to more than three hundred dollars, with a mean of about one hundred twenty dollars; Women's Institute courses cost from fifteen to one hundred thirty-five dollars.

2. Enrollees actually pay about half the amount of fees charged for courses, with a mean of about sixty dollars. There is a marked tendency for enrollees to pay only amounts comparable to the proportions of the courses they have actually completed.

3. Persons who pay cash for their courses appear to be more persistent in their study of correspondence courses than those who make only small time payments. Two factors probably account for this difference: (a) the person who pays cash for his course may indicate by this method of payment that he is likely to be more systematic in his saving of money and in his habits of study; and (b) the larger the actual amount of money invested by the enrollee, the more likely he is to endeavor to get his money's worth out of the course.

4. A group of persons who made an unusually good record of relative course completions was made up of those who received Fortieth Anniversary Scholarships in 1932. These persons were probably not only of unusual ability, but undoubtedly more or less supervised and encouraged by the persons who nominated them, who were usually school teachers or administrators. The record of this group, one of the few where the difference between its mean and the mean for the entire International Correspondence Schools' sampling for the year in which it was included was more than three times the standard error of the difference, makes

it particularly significant to those who are interested in the values of supervised correspondence study.

5. So far as marks indicate, the semi-skilled laborer can be expected to do as good work with the lessons of the course that he selects for correspondence study as a man in an occupation ordinarily requiring greater ability.

6. The quality of the marks given by the correspondence instructors has a significant effect on the continuance of enrollee interest in study, the standard error of the difference being less than one-third of the actual difference between the percentage of lessons completed in courses by persons receiving marks of "A" and the entire sampling of enrollees for the two years with which this study is concerned. It appears likely from this that the present policy of the International Correspondence Schools and Women's Institute in giving large numbers of high marks may be of value in sustaining enrollee persistence in studying correspondence courses.

7. International Correspondence Schools' enrollees selected courses with a mean number of about fifty lessons; the schools supplied them with a mean of about twenty lessons; and the enrollees returned a mean of about twelve lessons for criticism. The records of Women's Institute enrollees show means of twenty lessons in the courses selected, thirteen lessons supplied by the Institute for study, and eleven lessons returned for criticism.

8. Only about one enrollee in twenty actually completes all the lessons in an International Correspondence Schools' course and is granted a diploma.

9. Regardless of the length of courses selected for study, the mean number of lessons completed by the correspondence school enrollees seldom exceeds eighteen, except in the case of the longest courses in engineering. The mean number of lessons completed is so consistently below twenty that it should be given careful consideration in determining the optimum length for correspondence courses.

10. There is no indication of additional stimulus to study when reports of enrollee progress are sent to employers at the request of enrollees. There is considerable increase in the mean percent-

age of lessons completed, however, when reports of enrollee progress are sent to a high school teacher or principal. This appears to add evidence to the conclusion in summary 5 above, to the effect that there is value in even slight supervision in encouraging enrollee persistence in correspondence study.

11. Approximately 10 per cent of the enrollees may be expected to change courses within three years after their original enrollment (at least one case considered in this study made the change eight years after enrollment). In most cases the second choice course is shorter than the original choice, and the relative completion of the new course is less than that of the earlier selection. Unless more adequate guidance can be given in the selection of the new courses, there appears to be little value in allowing course changes except in gaining increased good will toward the schools.

12. Certain general conclusions should be particularly noted in summary 11 above: (a) there is a significant relationship between the portion of courses completed by enrollees and the portion of fees they pay; (b) there is definite indication that enrollees who receive more or less supervision and encouragement from public school teachers or administrators are more likely to be persistent in their study than others; (c) regardless of the length of courses selected for study, enrollees seldom complete more than eighteen lessons; and (d) the policy of the school in allowing changes of courses does not increase the enrollees' persistence in study.

#### STATED OPINIONS OF ENROLLEES

1. The principal reasons stated by enrollees for studying correspondence courses are (a) opportunity to arrange hours of study to suit student's convenience, (b) opportunity to secure an education at less cost than attending college or other schools, (c) opportunity to study subjects not offered in local institutions, (d) opportunity to study at home, (e) opportunity to study alone, and (f) influence of correspondence school representatives, of friends, of employers, or of others. All of these reasons, except (f), indicate quite clearly that correspondence schools po-

tentially serve an important portion of education, so far largely untouched by other institutions.

2. The main purposes for selecting certain courses for study were stated by the enrollees to be (*a*) to learn a new occupation, (*b*) to learn more about the occupation in which they were already engaged, (*c*) to accomplish a vocational purpose not clearly indicated, and (*d*) for academic or avocational purposes. When the vocational nature of the courses offered by the schools is considered, it is surprising to find as high as 14 per cent of the enrollees studying courses for cultural or avocational purposes.

3. The purposes for enrolling for specific courses do not have any great effect on the enrollees' persistence in study. Although persons who enroll for avocational or cultural purposes or to prepare to enter a different occupation show a higher mean percentage of lessons completed in courses, these superiorities are not significant, as in no case does the difference of the means exceed even the sigma of the difference of the means. This is one of the wholly unexpected results of this study, as G. B. Smith's investigation of home-study students had indicated that the enrollee purpose was a very influential factor in relative completion of correspondence courses.

4. About one enrollee in three feels that he made a mistake in enrolling for a correspondence course, according to the questionnaire and interview replies. This proportion is comparable with the elimination of students from many colleges. The purpose of enrolling does not have any marked effect on relative satisfaction of enrollees who study courses by correspondence methods, except that those who hope by such study to prepare themselves to enter a different occupation appear to be least likely to be satisfied by such study. The attitude of the last mentioned group may be influenced by the generally unsatisfactory employment conditions at the time this study was made.

5. Persons who enroll for correspondence study in order to improve in their present occupation seem to stand a slightly better chance of being satisfied with their courses than any others except those who enroll for cultural or avocational purposes. The objectives obtained are not always in line with the purposes for

enrolling; three out of four enrollees stated that the correspondence lessons proved to be of value to them aside from any help the instruction may have given them with their work. About one in six of the persons who replied to interviews or questionnaires gave evidence of vocational improvement as a result of correspondence study by stating that his correspondence study had helped him to secure a better job.

6. One out of four enrollees who failed to complete their courses stated that they dropped out because of dissatisfaction with the course or with the representatives of the correspondence schools. This is one of the most significant proportions revealed by this investigation, for it gives important evidence that failure to complete courses is in itself not an adequate criterion of enrollee satisfaction.

7. The stated reasons for not completing correspondence courses are comparable with the reasons for not completing college or adult education courses. The primary reasons stated for not completing correspondence courses are (*a*) dissatisfaction with some phase of the correspondence course, its administration or instruction, (*b*) change of plans, (*c*) neglect of study, (*d*) financial difficulties, and (*e*) ill health.

8. Seven out of ten of the interview and questionnaire replies indicated that correspondence courses are no more difficult than classroom courses, but less than six out of ten found them to be as interesting as the latter. The interest value of the correspondence courses apparently still needs strengthening, although this weakness may be inherent in a situation where the teacher is remote from the learner.

9. About three out of ten of the enrollees found the lessons in the courses too difficult, too easy, or too general.

10. About two out of ten enrollees believed they had enrolled for a course not directly suited to their needs. Proper guidance by the local representatives of the schools could materially reduce this proportion of unsuited enrollees.

11. Enrollees claim to have devoted a mean of approximately eight hours per week, with a range of from two to forty hours, to the study of their correspondence courses.

12. Ninety-five per cent of the interview and questionnaire replies indicated that the enrollees were satisfied with the correspondence schools instructors' criticisms, corrections, and comments on the lessons; over 80 per cent were satisfied with the amount of advice and help given by the instructors; and about 70 per cent would have liked "to have met with the teacher at least occasionally." Such an unexpectedly high proportion of persons satisfied with the work of the correspondence instructors is a reflection of the painstaking corrections, criticisms, and suggestions that are written by the International Correspondence Schools' and Women's Institute instructors on the papers sent in by the enrollees.

13. Some enrollees mistake the local representative of the correspondence schools for the instructor.

14. Half of the enrollees who felt that the local representative of the International Correspondence Schools influenced their enrollment were dissatisfied with their courses, indicating that "high pressure salesmanship" should have no place in the correspondence school field.

15. One out of three of the enrollees stated that he would like to have more guidance in selecting the proper courses to study. This gives added evidence of the accuracy of the conclusion stated in summary 10 above.

16. One out of four of the persons who were enrolled by the local representatives of the International Correspondence Schools felt that the man had misrepresented the course to them. Certainly the efforts of the National Home Study Council and the correspondence schools themselves should be constantly directed toward elimination of this difficulty by raising the standards for employment of this group of men.

17. The two principal complaints that enrollees make against the local representatives of the correspondence schools are (a) that the representatives promise to secure, or help to secure, better jobs for the enrollees and then fail to do so; and (b) that the representatives are too interested in their commissions for selling courses to give the best service to the enrollees.

18. One of the most important single facts revealed by the

questionnaire and interview replies is that nearly 22 per cent of the persons who enrolled for International Correspondence Schools' courses for vocational reasons believed that the course actually did help them to secure better jobs.

Economists emphasize the importance of any factor that assists people in changing the nature of their occupation. F. W. Taussig states, "For most men it is very difficult, for many it is impossible, to move from the group in which they find themselves into one more favorable. . . . Freedom in the choice of occupations is one of the most important conditions of happiness. . . . The removal of all artificial barriers to choice of occupations is the most important goal for society."<sup>1</sup> H. F. Clark adds that "Any factor that increases occupational mobility, other things being equal, increases the national income."<sup>2</sup> To the extent, then, that the International Correspondence Schools assist in the accomplishment of this occupational mobility, there can be little question as to the importance of their contribution in the educational field.

The data in Table XXX reveal that nearly 23 per cent of the people who stated that they enrolled in the International Correspondence Schools for any vocational purpose believed that the course actually did help them to secure a better job. If even one man in five betters his occupational status by his study of correspondence courses, then, in the above words of the economists, the International Correspondence Schools have made a definite contribution to "the most important goal for society" and to "the national income."

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### *Acceptance of Enrollments*

One objective of this study was the setting up of criteria for determining who should take correspondence courses. The evidence of all the factors in relation to persistence in studying courses, however, indicates no valid criteria readily available. Age, occupation, geographical location, education, and ability

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Taussig, *Principles of Economics*, pp. 134-138. 1911.

<sup>2</sup> H. F. Clark, *Economic Theory and Correct Occupational Distribution*. 1931.

level give no conclusive indication of the likelihood of an enrollee completing a course. This, however, is not entirely unexpected. Psychologists have, for several years, been pointing out that ability is no positive determiner of success. T. L. Kelley states, "Ability alone does not determine fitness, for fitness is indissolubly connected with interest."<sup>3</sup> H. C. Link also states, "Jobs and positions in industry are based not on degrees of intelligence, but on *kinds* of intelligence or ability. . . . One of the most important factors in vocational selection is the factor of the individual's choice."<sup>4</sup> Considering that nearly all of the courses in the International Correspondence Schools are intended to prepare students for successful participation in occupations, H. A. Toops' conclusion should be noted: "Average intelligence is satisfactory for most trades; high average is necessary for competency in the clerical and professional occupations."<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing indicates that the correspondence schools are following a reasonable procedure in accepting practically all enrollments for correspondence courses. It is recommended, however, that when the enrollee's application indicates that he is employed in an occupation commonly requiring only the lowest levels of ability, he be given a test of reading ability, intelligence, or vocational aptitude; the schools should be assured that the applicant's reading ability is sufficient to read and comprehend the lessons. Experimentation with simple forms of self-administering tests should develop a means of determining the group of deficient ability that is foredoomed to failure in such study. It might also prove fruitful to give a similar test to eliminate all but men of exceptional ability from enrollment in professional courses. Such a procedure has been suggested by Viteles for selection of employees in industry in general.<sup>6</sup> Unless some definite indication of ability is obtained for the two above-mentioned groups, it is hardly sound to enroll a person

<sup>3</sup> T. L. Kelley, "Principles Underlying the Classification of Men," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 50-67. March, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> H. C. Link, *Employment Psychology*, pp. 138, 440. 1919.

<sup>5</sup> H. A. Toops, *Trade Tests in Education*, p. 99. 1921.

<sup>6</sup> M. S. Viteles, "Tests in Industry," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 57-63. March, 1921.



in either classification with the expectation of payment for his course.

### *Local Representatives*

The bookkeeper of a Newark, New Jersey, concern stated, "The man you call the 'local representative' was the International Correspondence School to me. Of course, I realize now that he was mainly a bill collector and the real instructors are in Scranton." This impression recurred frequently in the interview discussions and in the questionnaire replies, and indicates the vital need of having the school properly represented by the men who contact the enrollees. Through the efforts of the schools themselves, as well as the National Home Study Council, improvement has been made in controlling and improving the services of this portion of the personnel. If the local representative is to cease to be a primary cause of dissatisfaction with the correspondence school method of study, it is essential that he be a man of good character, well educated, and with a pleasing personality, and that he apply at least the major principles of vocational guidance in assisting enrollees in the selection of courses and give major emphasis to encouraging enrollees in the study of their lessons, making such adjustments as appear necessary as the work progresses.

It may be true, as claimed by some men in the correspondence school field, that the present system of paying representatives on a commission basis is essential as an incentive to the salesmanship aspect of the representative's work. It would seem a more justifiable procedure, however, to base at least a portion of the commission on the number of lessons the enrollee completes rather than solely on the amount of money the representative collects regardless of whether or not the enrollee studies any lessons. Data presented in this study show that the enrollees tend to pay only in proportion to the number of lessons they have completed in courses; hence it appears unlikely that the schools would lose by the adoption of such a method for determining the commissions of field representatives; in fact, they might gain by increasing the length of study period and with it the number of

payments for courses. Furthermore, this method of determining the income of representatives would be more nearly comparable to that of other educational workers, and should help to attract more men of the type who will make a real contribution in the communities they serve. Better training and supervision of representatives and greater emphasis on the educational aspect of the field representative's work should help to eliminate much of the criticism.

This recommendation is made with due cognizance of the fact that many of the local representatives employed by the International Correspondence Schools seem to be of excellent character and appear to be making conscientious efforts to serve the enrollees in their territories. The aim should be to attract more of such men and to eliminate any justification for enrollee dissatisfaction as a result of the poorer types of local representatives.

#### *Field Instructors*

The preponderance of enrollees who desire "to meet with the teacher at least occasionally" indicates a field for real service. If the cost would not be prohibitive, it might be helpful to assign to each divisional office a small group of instructors, whose only duties would be to keep definite office hours each day, when they would be available for advice and assistance, and to contact the students at their homes to advise and encourage them in their work. It is quite true that a staff representing all courses offered by the schools would not be feasible; but it would not be impracticable to experiment with the use of a few men well trained in the fundamentals of the courses most frequently selected in the various regions. Even two to four home contacts a year might prove to be of inestimable value in improving the relative completion of courses.

The value of personal contacts between the enrollees and representatives of the schools whose main interest would be in instruction would certainly not be limited to the enrollees. If a special staff of field instructors should not prove feasible, the correspondence schools should experiment with sending the regular instructors out into the field at least once each year to con-

tact students and gain definite, practical ideas for making their criticisms and comments more valuable and interesting to the students with whom they communicate.

### *Payments for Courses*

Data secured for this study showed a definite relationship between the proportion of the courses completed and the proportion of fees actually paid by the enrollees. The records also revealed a few students who paid only small portions of the fees but completed nearly all the lessons in their courses. On the other hand, another group of enrollees paid in full for the courses and apparently received only small portions of the courses they selected for study. During interviews, members of the last-mentioned group expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the value received for the money invested.

The correspondence schools may well limit the period of time during which instructional services will be available to the enrollees, but they may be criticized for failure to send the enrollees all the course materials when it is understood that the cost of such materials is included in the fees that have been paid for the courses. The plan recommended by this study would be the setting up of fees on a plan similar to that used by most colleges; that is, the fees would be based on a registration fee that would be returnable, and on tuition fees, a portion of which might be refunded to the enrollee, depending upon the services he receives prior to his withdrawal from study.

### *Length of Courses*

The correspondence schools would do well to consider the psychological values of success and of completion of definite steps of progress, if they desire to increase the number of satisfied enrollees. It is recommended that, so far as possible, original course enrollments should be for short courses; these frequently should be part of a larger curriculum which the enrollee can eventually complete, just as the college student completes semesters of his college curriculum. In order to make the advancement more tangible to the enrollee, it might be advisable to award

certificates for satisfactory completion of courses and a diploma for completion of all the courses in a curriculum. Such short courses should bring at least partial success to the average man and in the end should better the record of course completions and of total fees paid for courses.

### *Rural Areas*

It has been pointed out in this study that the International Correspondence Schools serve largely an urban population, in spite of the fact that it is the people who live in the larger centers who have the opportunities for vocational instruction most frequently at hand in classroom situations. However, nearly half the population of the United States still lives in places with a population of under twenty-five hundred people. It is not unlikely that, with the present developments in vocational education in high schools and adult classes, the rural areas may prove to be the greatest field for service by the correspondence schools in the future. It is recommended that renewed attention be given to the development of short courses of interest and value to the people who live in areas of sparse population remote from the better educational opportunities.

### *Research*

No institution of any size can hope to constantly advance or even maintain its place in contemporary society unless it is constantly analyzing itself in every detail, correcting the bad points and strengthening the good ones. It is recommended that the correspondence schools give more attention to needed research in their own field. Such research could be carried on quite adequately in any one of three ways: (a) a research department in the more progressive of the schools; (b) a research staff to be added to the personnel of the National Home Study Council in Washington; or (c) grants to the graduate departments of the larger universities to finance the work of advanced students doing research in the field of correspondence study. Each of these latter projects should, of course, be approved by the Home Study Council to eliminate duplication.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Although 98 per cent of the persons who resided at, or near, the place where they originally enrolled were interviewed, the fact remains that this represents only 63 per cent of the total sampling selected for this purpose. Inspection of the economic and social environment of the enrollees as shown by their residences at the time of enrollment, and of their characteristics as shown in the records of the International Correspondence Schools, indicates no apparent difference between the group that was interviewed and the group that had disappeared; nevertheless it is barely possible that the fact that they moved indicates a lack of stability in the character of the missing enrollees that might have had an influence on the favorable or unfavorable aspect of portions of this report had it been possible to include this group. There might be considerable value in interviewing a group of enrollees within a year after enrollment, before many of them have had opportunity to move, rather than four or eight years later, as in the present case. This would eliminate the possibility of many having completed courses, but it would be more than offset by the greater proportion of the sampling that could be located and by the fact that their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the courses would be more recent and probably more readily and definitely expressed. A categorical analysis of the factors influencing satisfaction or dissatisfaction of enrollees would be of great value in improving the services of the correspondence schools.

2. A *brief* questionnaire mailed to enrollees within six months after enrollment, while their reactions are still somewhat emotionalized, might also bring valuable information regarding specific causes of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It is doubtful if any questionnaire sent out at any time in excess of six months after enrollment would ever bring a reply that would be statistically significant.

3. Studies of enrollees in the specific subject fields might lead to the setting up of more definite criteria for acceptance of enrollments in these fields than at present appears to be practicable

for such selection of enrollments in the correspondence school field in general.

4. A more nearly complete picture of the characteristics essential in enrollees to complete correspondence courses could undoubtedly be derived from a very careful case study of a number of persons who have actually completed courses. It probably would be advisable to limit such studies to one or two specific subject fields.

5. A follow-up study of correspondence school graduates might be made to determine what practical values they have derived from their study of correspondence courses.

6. A study of courses and materials might aid in determining how they compare with classroom courses as to: (a) subjects covered, (b) method of presentation, (c) accuracy of information given, (d) inclusion of current knowledge.

7. Studies of instructors in correspondence schools might indicate whether or not the individuality of the instructor is carried over to the student, and whether or not individual instructors have any effect on persistence of study by enrollees.

8. A survey of local representatives might ascertain what techniques are used in securing and counseling enrollees and the apparent effect of such techniques.

9. An analysis of the elements in the educational preparation of enrollees might show whether or not success in any specific classroom subjects can be correlated with success in correspondence study.

## APPENDICES





APPENDIX II  
TRANSCRIPT OF I.C.S. AND W.I. ACCOUNT CARD

(Enrollee's Record No.)			
District	Route No.	(Record of collection letters sent)	
(Enrollee's name and address including change of address)			
Title of Course			
Occupation			
Works for		Guarantor	
Com. Check		Reference	
Collection Address		Student's Nearest Relative	
Enrollment Taken By			

(Note: The reverse side of card bears a record of date and amounts paid for course.)

## APPENDIX III

RELATIVE COST OF SECURING QUESTIONNAIRE AND  
INTERVIEW RESPONSES

## INTERVIEWS

Transportation and accommodations: \$254.00 (approx.)

Number of interviews obtained:

75

Response: 98% of the enrollees living at or near the place where they originally enrolled.

63% of the entire sampling.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Photo-offset—3000 copies of four-page questionnaire ..... \$ 30.00

Multigraph letter to accompany questionnaire ..... 10.00

Printing envelopes for sending and return ..... 7.50

Address and filling envelopes .... 36.00

Postage, sending 2239 questionnaires ..... 22.39

Postage, return, 543 undelivered . 8.15

Postage, 116 replies ..... 4.64

Total cost..... \$118.68

Cost per questionnaire reply: \$1.02

Response: 5.2% of the group to whom questionnaires were sent.

9.9% (approx.) of the group to whom questionnaires were actually delivered.

## APPENDIX IV

## QUESTIONNAIRE ON CORRESPONDENCE STUDY

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State)

A. PRESENT OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

B. FATHER'S OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

C. Are you married? (Check the correct reply) Yes..... No.....

D. Check below the highest grade that you attended in school:

Elementary School

High School

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10... 11... 12...

Business School

College or University

1... 2... 3... 4... No. of yrs. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8...

Major department?  
\_\_\_\_\_

E. When you studied in school under regular classroom procedures, did you do better work in some subjects than you did in others?

(a) In which subjects did you get your best marks? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) In which subjects did you get your poorest marks? \_\_\_\_\_

F. With which correspondence schools have you been enrolled?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_G. Why did you enroll for a correspondence course instead of studying in a school offering regular classroom instruction, such as a high school, college, university extension class, or business school? Did you feel you were too old to attend high school? Were you confined to your home by serious injuries? Were you unable to afford to go to college? These are just examples of possible reasons; *your* reasons may have been entirely different. Please list the *three main reasons* you enrolled for a correspondence course, in the order of their importance.

1.

2.

3.

## PLEASE CHECK AT THE RIGHT THE SENTENCE THAT MOST NEARLY STATES YOUR BELIEF

- H. Are you satisfied that you gained the purpose for which you enrolled in the correspondence course?
- (a) I gained much more than I had even hoped to gain (or learn) . . . . .
  - (b) I gained somewhat more than I had expected from the course . . . . .
  - (c) The course was just what I expected it to be . . . . .
  - (d) I was rather disappointed with the course . . . . .
  - (e) The course was a total loss to me . . . . .
- I. What is your feeling about your contact with the instructor?
- (a) I was very glad not to have to listen to any teacher . . . . .
  - (b) I rather enjoyed not having to attend classes or to meet with any teacher . . . . .
  - (c) I didn't care whether I met with the instructor or not . . . . .
  - (d) I would have liked to have met with the teacher at least occasionally . . . . .
  - (e) I lost interest in the course because I couldn't meet with the teacher . . . . .
- J. As compared with courses you have had with classroom teachers, did you find the correspondence courses to be harder?
- (a) Correspondence courses were very much easier . . . . .
  - (b) Correspondence courses were somewhat easier . . . . .
  - (c) The courses were about the same in difficulty . . . . .
  - (d) Correspondence courses were somewhat harder . . . . .
  - (e) Correspondence courses were very much harder . . . . .
- K. Did you find the correspondence course to be as interesting as most classroom courses you have had?
- (a) The correspondence course was more interesting . . . . .
  - (b) The courses were about the same in interest . . . . .
  - (c) The classroom courses were more interesting . . . . .
- L. How did the amount of help given you by the correspondence teacher compare with the amount given by most of your classroom teachers?
- (a) Received more help from the classroom teacher . . . . .
  - (b) Received about the same help from each teacher . . . . .
  - (c) Received more help from the correspondence teacher . . . . .
- M. Did the length of time between sending in your lessons and receiving the corrections from the correspondence school instructor reduce your interest in the work?
- (a) Waiting for replies caused me to lose interest in the work . . . . .
  - (b) Waiting for replies troubled me somewhat . . . . .
  - (c) I didn't mind waiting for replies to my lessons . . . . .
  - (d) Waiting for replies increased my interest in the correspondence course . . . . .
- N. How much time were you able to devote to your correspondence study each week?

(About \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week)

*PLEASE ENCIRCLE YOUR OPINION ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS  
IN THE COLUMNS AT THE RIGHT*

- O. Were the lessons usually too difficult to understand? ..... Yes No
- P. Were the lessons too simple or elementary to be interesting? ..... Yes No
- Q. Were the lessons too general to be of use to you? ..... Yes No
- R. Do you feel that you selected the wrong correspondence course? .... Yes No
- S. Did the instructors give you plenty of advice and help with your lessons? Yes No
- T. Were the corrections on your papers clear and easily understood? ... Yes No
- U. Did the correspondence school representatives take plenty of time to help you to select the proper course? ..... Yes No
- V. Do you feel that the representative (salesman) of the correspondence school misrepresented the course for which you enrolled? ..... Yes No
- W. Do you believe that the correspondence course helped you to do your job better? ..... Yes No
- X. Do you believe that the correspondence course helped you to get a better job? ..... Yes No
- Y. Do you believe that the correspondence course helped you to secure a better salary or to avoid a salary cut? ..... Yes No
- Z. Do you feel that the correspondence course was valuable to you aside from any help it may have been to you with your work? ..... Yes No
- AA. Are you satisfied that your investment in the correspondence course was (or will be) worth while? ..... Yes No
- BB. If it was necessary for you to study for further advancement, would you probably enroll for another correspondence course? ..... Yes No
- CC. If a friend of yours wanted to study a vocational course, would you advise him to enroll for a correspondence course? ..... Yes No
- DD. Did you complete the correspondence course for which you enrolled? . Yes No  
If not, please tell us the main reasons why you did not complete all the lessons in the course.
- 
- 
-

104 PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ENROLLEE

EE. Check the reasons for choosing the correspondence course for which you enrolled:

- (a) To complete school requirements .....
  - (b) To learn more about the job at which you were working .....
  - (c) To prepare to enter a different occupation .....
  - (d) To secure a license or certificate (engineer, pilot, etc.) .....
  - (e) To become better educated .....
  - (f) For a hobby (to make good use of spare time) .....
  - (g) Because your boss advised you to take the course .....
  - (h) Other reason (please write in the reason) .....
- 
- 

FF. Have you been unemployed since January 1, 1928? (By unemployed is meant "out of a job, able to work, and looking for a job" or "having a job but on lay-off.") (Check the correct answer)

Yes..... No.....

If you answered "Yes" to question FF, please check the figures nearest the number of months you have been unemployed since January 1, 1928.

Over 2 yrs.	1 to 2 yrs.	6 to 12 mos.	1 to 6 mos.	Less than 1 month
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

THE ABOVE QUESTIONS ARE AIMED TO DISCOVER HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT CORRESPONDENCE STUDY. THEY MAY NOT HAVE EVEN TOUCHED UPON ANY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR YOUR LIKE OR DISLIKE OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDY. PLEASE ADD ANYTHING ELSE THAT WOULD HELP TO SHOW THE VALUES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDY.

(Please return this question sheet promptly in the enclosed stamped envelope to Richard B. Kennan, Bancroft Hall, 509 West 121st Street, New York City.)

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## VITA

RICHARD BARNES KENNAN was born at Fitchburg, Massachusetts, on October 3, 1902. He graduated from the State Normal School at Hyannis, Massachusetts, in 1923. The following year he was principal of the junior high school at Orleans, Massachusetts. From 1924 to 1927 he was principal of the elementary school at Hazardville, Connecticut; during these years he studied two summers at Clark University. In 1929 he received the B. S. and M. A. degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University. For two years he was part-time instructor in the Horace Mann School. From 1931 to 1935 he was superintendent of the special school district at Georgetown, Delaware. In 1935 he returned to Teachers College to resume his studies. From 1937 up to the present time he has been assistant professor of education at the University of Vermont.

Mr. Kennan is a member of Phi Delta Kappa and Kappa Delta Pi. He has been a Dean's Scholar and a Teachers College Fellow. He is the author of articles in professional magazines as well as local school reports, and has contributed to Delaware state reports and to a handbook on supervised correspondence study.